

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

23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2023 | Volume - 9 - 04/08

<p><a href="#">‘Pakistan’s economic conditions delay CPEC development’</a> The Express Tribune   22<sup>nd</sup> August China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC) Chairman Yo Bo has emphasised that Pakistan’s economic circumstances were primarily responsible for delay in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)’s development. In a meeting at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Yo shed light on the transformative progress of Gwadar under CPEC. He underscored the significance of Gwadar, hailing it as CPEC’s pivotal axis.</p>	<p><a href="#">Bangladesh-US Defence Dialogue begins</a> Bangladesh Post   23<sup>rd</sup> August The 10th bilateral defence dialogue between Bangladesh and the United States begins today in Dhaka with a view to discussing cooperation on various <u>defence</u> topics and two countries’ shared Indo-Pacific vision. The two-day long defence dialogue (August 23 and 24) is expected to discuss cooperation on a myriad of defence topics and the two countries’ shared Indo-Pacific vision. News agency UNB reports; both the governments (Bangladesh and the USA) continue to work together to advance a shared ...</p>	<p><a href="#">Education denied to 80% of school-aged girls in Afghanistan: Care Intl report</a> The Khaama Press   23<sup>rd</sup> August According to a recent report by Care International, a staggering 80 per cent of school-aged Afghan girls and young women are currently being denied access to education in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is the sole country globally to enforce a ban on girls’ and women’s education, resulting in a substantial economic toll of approximately \$5.4 billion. “Currently, 80 per cent of school-aged Afghan girls and young women – 2.5 million people are out of school,” the report reads.</p>
--	--	---

## PAKISTAN

### [Interim PM Kakar vows to create job opportunities for youth](#)

The News | 20<sup>th</sup> August

Interim Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Sunday vowed to provide employment opportunities to youth and maintain the law and order situation in Balochistan.

Addressing an event through a video link, organised by the All Parties Conference in his native village Kan Mehtarzai, the caretaker PM said his government would accelerate the ongoing development projects in Kan Mehtarzai, Killa Saifullah and other areas of the province.

### [GSP Plus mutually beneficial scheme, FM tells EU envoy](#)

The Nation | 23<sup>rd</sup> August

Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani yesterday told European Union Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Riina Kionka that the GSP+ was a mutually beneficial scheme for both sides. In a meeting here, they also discussed progress made through several institutional mechanisms and agreed that GSP+ was a mutually beneficial scheme, said a Foreign Office statement. Pakistan and EU reaffirmed the commitment to further enhance cooperation in all areas of mutual interest, the statement added.

### [More areas under threat as Sutlej swells](#)

Dawn | 23<sup>rd</sup> August

The swelling Sutlej river continued to imperil villages along the bank as it continued to flow in an extreme high-level flood at Head Sulemanki, near Pakpattan on Tuesday.

The high water level would inundate several districts in Kasur, Okara, Pakpattan, Vehari, Bahawalnagar, Multan, Lodhran, and Bahawalpur, according to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Punjab.

The authority spokesperson said 122,000 cusecs of water was passing through Ganda Singh Wala near Kasur and a high-level flood was being witnessed downstream at Sulemanki Headworks where the flow reached 171,000 cusecs.

## SRI LANKA

### [Sri Lanka President, Singapore's PM explore avenues for increased economic involvement](#)

Colombo Page | 22<sup>nd</sup> August

Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, who is on an official visit to Singapore, held discussions with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong Tuesday.

The focal point of these discussions was the reinforcement of collaborative efforts between the two nations. The leaders emphasized the importance of sustained cooperation and explored avenues for increased economic involvement, President's Media Division said.

[Landmark 100 MW solar project by WindForce, Lakdhanavi, and The Blue Circle to shape SL's future power pricing](#)

Daily Mirror | 23<sup>rd</sup> August

The 100 MW solar power generation project undertaken by the consortium comprising WindForce PLC, Lakdhanavi, and Singapore's The Blue Circle, is set to become a significant milestone in Sri Lanka's power sector as it aims to establish benchmark pricing for upcoming power generation ventures conducted by the private sector.

"With this project, two Sri Lankan companies with the support of a leading global renewable energy player will be able to set a benchmark price for large-scale renewable energy projects, specially solar power," Lakdhanavi Director/CEO M.J.M.N. Marikkar told a press briefing held yesterday in Colombo, where representatives from WindForce and Blue Circle were also present.

[LA accepts USD6.2 mn worth state-of-the-art military communication vehicles](#)

The Island | 23<sup>rd</sup> August

Acting Defence Minister Premitha Bandara Tennakoon yesterday (22) accepted USD 6.2 million worth 'Emergency Command and Communication System Vehicle Fleet' (11 automobiles) from the Chinese Ministry of National Defence. The event took place at the Army Headquarters premises.

These vehicles, embedded with ultra-modern communication devices, have been designed for military purposes, the MoD said.

## **AFGHANISTAN**

[Afghan entrepreneurs participate in China trade fair](#)

The Afghanistan Times | 20<sup>th</sup> August

Fifty Afghan businessmen, accompanied by a delegation from the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment, joined the 7th South Asia-China Import and Export Exhibition. The event showcased Afghan products and services through booths set up by these entrepreneurs. According to Khan Mohammad

Sarfraz, a representative of the Chamber, the exhibition provided a platform for networking and display. Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the political deputy Prime Minister, highlighted the significance of such events in fostering closer ties among regional nations and boosting trade prospects. He also stressed the importance of supporting the economy through government initiatives.

#### [Former UN Official in Op-Ed Calls for West to Not Isolate Afghanistan](#)

TOLO News | 22<sup>nd</sup> August

The president of the Open Society Foundation and a senior former UN official, Mark Malloch-Brown, in a piece in the UK's Financial Times, said that the international community's current policy is harming the prospects of those who need "our help most," particularly women and girls.

Citing the deteriorated situation in Afghanistan, Malloch-Brown in an article titled "The West must stop playing the 'Great Game' in Afghanistan once and for all" said that once more Afghanistan is isolated: denied diplomatic recognition, aid drying up, sanctioned and its assets frozen.

## **BANGLADESH**

#### [PM Hasina invites South African entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh](#)

Prothom Alo | 23<sup>rd</sup> August

Prime minister Sheikh Hasina on Wednesday invited South African entrepreneurs to make investments in Bangladesh that seeks to become a trillion-dollar economy and a fully developed smart nation by 2041.

"Bangladesh progresses toward prosperity. We want you to join our journey of development. Do invest in Bangladesh; we are confident that your investment will be primed for success, and we are fully prepared for a sustainable partnership," she said.

#### [Hajj Minister: No challenge in Saudi, Bangladesh ties](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 23<sup>rd</sup> August

Visiting Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah Dr Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah on Wednesday said that there were no challenges in the relations between Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh

"We don't see challenges. We see opportunities. Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh always have very strong relations. It will continue in that way. We are working to make it even stronger. Sky's the limit," he said, after his meeting with state minister for foreign affairs Md Shahriar Alam.

This is the first ever visit of any Saudi Hajj minister to Bangladesh.

The Saudi investment minister is also coming in "few weeks".

## **BHUTAN**

### [Women's participation in political parties increases](#)

Kuensel | 23<sup>rd</sup> August

With 23 women participating in the upcoming National Assembly elections, the number of women candidates has increased compared to past elections.

In the 2018 elections, the four registered political parties fielded 19 female candidates. However, considering an additional political party into the fray, the women's participation rate per party has declined.

In 2018, 10.1 percent of the candidates were female.

In this election, women candidates make up 9.7 percent of the 235 candidates from 47 constituencies to date.

### [Another Herculean stride for green energy](#)

Business Bhutan | 21<sup>st</sup> August

In what is a major move that would reduce carbon footprints and green house gas emissions, the Department of Energy (DoE), Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources (MoENR) is vigorously in the process of formulating a green hydrogen road-map.

Green hydrogen is obtained through electrolysis powered by renewable electricity, generated through technologies such as solar panels or wind turbines.

According to the department, the road-map will serve as a strategic blueprint detailing planned initiatives, targets, and milestones for the development and utilization of green hydrogen within the country.

## **MALDIVES**

### [President: Past government isolated Maldives in the name of patriotism](#)

Sun | 24<sup>th</sup> August

President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has said that Maldives was kept separate from the international community in the name of protecting patriotism in Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom's term as president.

Speaking at R. Inguraidhoo after arriving there for his campaign, President Solih said that the past government had isolated Maldives from the world under the pretence of patriotism and so the connections to other countries had frayed.

### [Maldives' tourist arrival figure tops 1,165,337](#)

Raajje | 18<sup>th</sup> August

Maldives tourist arrivals figure has topped 1,165,337.

This was revealed by the Ministry of Tourism through its latest weekly tourist arrival statistics publicized on Friday.

As such, since the new year began, a total of 1,165,337 tourists have touched down in the archipelago nation.

Monthly figures show that 172,499 tourists were welcomed during January, 177,915 in February, 173,514 in March, 164,357 in April, 120,959 in May and 120,363 during June. In July, Maldives welcomed 145,629 visitors.

## **MYANMAR**

### [China Pouring in Billions to Prop Up Myanmar's Military Regime](#)

The Irrawaddy | 22<sup>nd</sup> August

China has 597 investment projects in Myanmar totaling US\$ 21.863 billion in value, junta investment and foreign economic relations minister Dr. Kan Zaw told the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) Economic Corridor Governors Forum held in China's Kunming last week.

Chinese investment accounts for 23.5 percent of total foreign investment in Myanmar, the majority of which is in the electricity sector, the minister added. Despite international condemnation, sanctions and corporate pullouts following the 2021 coup, China appears to be stepping up its engagement with Myanmar's ruling generals.

### [Myanmar junta keeps energy sector under military control with appointment of new ministers](#)

Myanmar Now | 18<sup>th</sup> August

As part of a reshuffle of key cabinet posts following its extension of emergency rule earlier this month, Myanmar's military junta has named two major generals to head its ministries of energy and electric power.

Nyan Tun, a retired major general who served as director of the military's engineering office, has been appointed minister of electric power, and Ko Ko Lwin, who was deputy chief of defence industries until the reshuffle, is now minister of energy. (The two ministries were originally one until they were separated by the regime in May of last year.)

## **NEPAL**

### [Country's trade deficit at Rs 115.71 billion](#)

The Himalayan Times | 23<sup>rd</sup> August

The country's trade deficit stood at Rs 115.71 billion in the first month of fiscal year 2023-24, that is, between mid-July and mid-August.

According to Nepal Trade Statistics unveiled by Department of Customs (DoC) today, the country's total trade gap had narrowed by 2.28 per cent compared to Rs 142.76 billion in the same period of previous fiscal.

As per the department, the imports fell by 1.56 per cent to Rs 129.23 billion in the review period compared to Rs 131.28 billion in the corresponding period of fiscal 2022-23.

#### [US lawmakers, MCC vice-president coming to Nepal next week](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 24<sup>th</sup> August

Amid an increase in the number of visits by US officials to Nepal in recent months, US ambassador Dean Thompson has also stepped up his engagements in Kathmandu.

Several sources in the government confirmed to the Post that a five-member US Congressional delegation is arriving in Kathmandu on August 30, coinciding with the day that marks the entry into force of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Nepal Compact, under which Nepal received a grant worth \$500 million.

#### [Nepal sees a remittance inflow of more than Rs 100 billion a month](#)

Onlinekhabar | 18<sup>th</sup> August

There was an incoming of more than Rs 100 billion worth of remittance on average in the fiscal year 2022/23.

According to [Nepal Rastra Bank](#), remittance worth Rs 1.220 trillion came into the country in the fiscal year. This, according to the central bank, is a 21.2 per cent increase compared to the fiscal year 2021/22.

This rise in remittance is thanks to a rise in the number of Nepali migrant workers leaving for foreign employment in the last year. Government data say the country saw a 40.3 per cent rise in migrant workers seeking work permits to work abroad.

[Donate](#)

---

*Ananta Aspen Centre is a non-partisan and a non for profit organization registered under the Indian Trusts Act and all donations are eligible under 12A*

*and 80G of the Income Tax Act. Further, the views and opinions of our guests and speakers do not necessarily reflect those of the Ananta Aspen Centre.*

**[www.anantaaspencentre.in](http://www.anantaaspencentre.in)**