

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

6th September, 2023 | Volume - 9 - 01/09

<p>Pakistan is in a debt (death) trap</p> <p>The Express Tribune 4th September</p> <p>During the last week the Pakistani Rupee achieved a historic first. It broke through the Rs300 barrier against the Dollar. Other firsts were also recorded: The price of petrol broke through the Rs300 per litre barrier. The cost of a unit of electricity rose to a historic high. More increases are forecast for the coming weeks. Inflation is on the rampage. It is near impossible now for the poor to cover their basic living expenses. Defiant protestors are taking to the streets to burn their electric bills in public. Retailers are observing "shutter down" days to register their disapproval or disgust at the way the</p>	<p>India increases financial allocation for the implementation of grant projects in Sri Lanka</p> <p>Colombo Page 2nd September</p> <p>Responding to rapid changes in the economic landscape of Sri Lanka, Government of India (GOI) has increased the financial allocation for various grant projects being implemented across the length and breadth of the country, the High Commission of India said Friday.</p> <p>Financial allocation has been increased by up to 50 percent for nine ongoing projects which are being executed under the India-Sri Lanka High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) framework. The overall financial commitment for these</p>	<p>Central Bank of Afghanistan to auction \$16 million on Tuesday</p> <p>The Khaama Press 4th September</p> <p>On Monday, the Central Bank of Afghanistan announced the auction of \$ 16 million US Dollars due to a recent increase in the relative value of the US dollar. The bank emphasized through a message on social media platform X that this money would be sold in the market for exchange.</p> <p>The Central Bank of Afghanistan has requested eligible banks, money exchangers, and financial services to participate in the bidding, and the winners are required to settle their accounts by the end of the exchange period. This comes as the dollar's value against</p>
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economy is being managed.	9 projects currently stands at close to Rs. 3 billion, after the increase.	the Afghan currency has recently decreased.
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PAKISTAN

[Chickenpox turns into epidemic in Chitral: EPI official](#)

Dawn | 5th September

The chickenpox outbreak has turned to an epidemic in Upper Chitral district as the number of infected persons has increased exponentially over the last two days with the disease also breaking out in the Mulkhow tehsil.

Confirming the alarming position of the contagious disease in Upper Chitral, district coordinator of Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) Dr Wali Khan said that the number of affected persons had reached 129 till Monday afternoon. He, however, said the unreported cases could be much higher.

[Army chief in Uzbekistan to boost military, defence ties](#)

The News | 5th September

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir called on Uzbekistan's top civil and military leadership and emphasised enhancing mutual training cooperation and intelligence sharing, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement on Tuesday.

According to the military's media wing, the army chief arrived in Uzbekistan on a two-day official visit aimed at "enhancing military-to-military cooperation and defence collaboration".

During the trip, COAS Gen Munir called on Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, defence minister and chairman and secretary of the State Security Service of the country.

[PM says trying to fix power bills issue without defying IMF deal](#)

The Nation | 1st September

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar said Thursday that the interim government closely monitored the issue of inflated electricity bills under a

solution-based approach and trying to resolve it without defiance of international monetary agreements.

Talking to media person in Islamabad on Thursday, he said this issue has become longstanding as a result of unfavorable contracts with IPPs during 90's inefficient bills recovery process and bad transmission lines.

SRI LANKA

[SL seeks foreign investors for electric bus pilot project](#)

Daily Mirror | 6th September

Transport, Highways and Mass Media Minister Bandula Gunawardana on Monday said the project which has received Cabinet nod "will be implemented as a domestic and foreign joint venture."

He said Expressions of Interest (EOIs) has been called for the project, which involves putting 200 electric buses on to the roads of the Western province.

Gunawardana said the investors will be allowed to import 200 buses and to set up charging points.

[2023: Over 900,000 foreign tourist arrivals upto August](#)

The Island | 6th September

The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) on Monday night announced that 138,405 foreign tourists had visited the country in August.

More than 900,000 foreign tourists had visited Sri Lanka between January and August 2023, the SLTDA said.

August recorded the second-highest monthly tourist arrivals so far in 2023.

There were 143,039 arrivals in the preceding month. There were only 719,978 arrivals in 2022.

AFGHANISTAN

[Afghanistan to establish railway link with Iranian Chabahar Port](#)

Afghanistan Times | 4th September

In a recent development, the Head of Taliban interim government's railway department, Bakht-ur-Rahman Sharafat, has revealed plans to connect Afghanistan with Iran's Chabahar port. This announcement follows his meeting with Iranian officials, where he shared this significant update on his social media account.

The proposed railway link will span from Nimroz-Milk to Zahadan, facilitating direct connectivity between Afghanistan and Chabahar port. Abdul Sami Durrani, spokesperson for the Railway Authority, has also confirmed substantial

progress in constructing the 140 km railway segment from Chabahar port to the Afghanistan border.

[Female Students Worry About Uncertain Fate](#)

TOLO News | 5th September

Female students raised concerns over their lack of participation in the kankor exam a day after the results of the 1402 (solar year) were released.

They said that they want to go to school and university like boys and play a role in society.

Female students once again asked the Islamic Emirate to immediately open schools and universities for girls.

"Yesterday, when the results were revealed, the girls' names weren't among the top 10. Every time the names of the females were on this list, but this time there were no girls, therefore we were quite sad," said Bushra, a student.

BANGLADESH

[PM Hasina to meet Modi 8 September](#)

Prothom Alo | 5th September

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will hold a bilateral meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 8 September evening if nothing changes in the schedule in the eleventh hour.

Diplomatic sources in the two countries said the meeting between the two prime ministers was finalised after a long procrastination. Sheikh Hasina will join the G-20 summit on the same day at noon as the chief of an especially invited country.

[Bond with Jakarta thrives](#)

Bangladesh Post | 5th September

Bangladesh and Indonesia have agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in energy, health, agricultural, trade, commerce and other sectors.

Both the countries on Monday signed three separate Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) on energy, agricultural and health cooperation.

Besides, Bangladesh urged Indonesia to ease the market access for Bangladeshi readymade garment (RMG) products to Indonesia.

[Dhaka's air quality still 'unhealthy', 6th most polluted in the world](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 6th September

With an air quality index (AQI) score of 155 at 8:30am on Wednesday morning, Dhaka ranked 6th on the list of cities worldwide with the worst air quality.

The United Arab Emirates' Dubai, China's Beijing and Qatar's Doha occupied the first, second, and third spots, with AQI scores of 168, 164, and 162 respectively. An AQI between 151 and 200 is considered 'unhealthy' while between 201–300 is 'very unhealthy', and 301–400 is 'hazardous', posing severe health risks to residents.

BHUTAN

[African Swine Fever outbreak in Trashigang](#)

Kuensel | 6th September

On September 2, an outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) was confirmed on a backyard pig farm in Tshogonpa village in Trashigang.

The source of the outbreak was traced to the feeding of contaminated kitchen waste.

A local man had illicitly sold fresh pork imported from Darranga, Assam, India, to the affected pig farmer, inadvertently introducing the ASF virus outbreak.

The offender was fined Nu 69,000 by the Bhutan Food and Drug Authority, as stated in the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock notification.

[Empowering youths on social issues and mental health](#)

Daily Bhutan | 4th September

Bhutan conducted a youth program to tackle pressing issues such as adolescent sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender-based violence (GBV), and mental health among young people.

To address urgent concerns related to adolescent sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender-based violence (GBV), and mental health among young individuals, while also advancing gender equity and societal transformation, the Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusion event occurred at the Royal University of Bhutan from August 29 to August 31.

[Inflation continues to rise](#)

Business Bhutan | 5th September

The National Statistics Bureau (NSB) has released its monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) report, which shows that the inflation rate increased to 4% in July 2023 compared to the same month last year. This means that the average prices of goods and services consumed by households increased by 4% over the period.

According to the report, the prices of both food and non-food items increased by 5.28% and 2.93% respectively. The report also reveals that the prices of all major divisions, except for transport, increased in July.

MALDIVES

[President Solih: 2026 debt repayment achievable through refinancing](#)

The Edition | 6th September

President and Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) candidate Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has said that he has a sound debt repayment plan in place to manage the USD 800 million foreign debt in 2026 through a debt refinancing strategy.

President Solih made these remarks during his visit to Haa Dhaalu Kulhudhuffushi, which is one of the final destinations for the president as he campaigns for re-election in this year's election, scheduled for September 9.

[Maldives tourist arrivals figure tops 1,226,814](#)

Raajje | 2nd September

The tourist arrival figure so far this year has topped 1,226,814.

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

As such, since the new year began, a total of 1,226,814 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, 120,363 during June and 145,629 in July. Although the figures dropped in May and June, they were still higher than 100,000 arrivals.

MYANMAR

[Election 'likely' in 2025, says Myanmar military's proxy party](#)

Myanmar Now | 6th September

Myanmar's junta will likely hold elections in 2025, even as the military struggles to crush resistance to its rule, officials of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) said on Tuesday.

The military justified its February 2021 putsch with unsubstantiated claims of widespread fraud in 2020 elections won resoundingly by the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi.

[Myanmar Junta Punishes Political Prisoners by Restricting Food, Medicine Deliveries](#)

The Irrawaddy | 5th September

Myanmar's military regime has again imposed restrictions on delivery of food and other necessities to political detainees in some jails including Insein Prison

in Yangon and Obo Prison in Mandalay, according to family members and volunteers.

The regime often responds to protests staged by political prisoners by banning their access to food and other necessities sent from outside jail.

Volunteers aiding political prisoners say the regime has imposed restrictions since late August at Insein Prison, Obo Prison, Patheingyi Prison in Ayeyarwady Region, Myingyan Prison in Mandalay Region, Tharyarwaddy Prison in Bago Region, and Dawei and Myeik prisons in Tanintharyi Region.

NEPAL

[Dengue infection on the rise in Sudurpaschim](#)

The Himalayan Times | 6th September

The Sudurpaschim Province is at high risk of dengue spread, according to the data from the Sudurpaschim Province Health Directorate. The focal person at the Directorate, Hemraj Joshi, said that the number of dengue patients is increasing day by day. The province recorded a total of 353 dengue patients in August alone. "The number of dengue patient has shot up in the month of August," he added.

In the past eight months, the province recorded 680 cases of dengue infection. As per the data, Kailali district has the highest number of dengue patients while Baitadi has the least number of the infection.

[Nepal, USA 40th Joint Combined Exchange Training to be conducted in Kathmandu](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 6th September

Nepal and the United States will hold the 40th edition of the annual Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) Balance Nail from September 10 to 29 in Kathmandu Valley.

Issuing a statement on Wednesday, the Nepal Army said that a total of 42 personnel— 30 from Nepal and 12 American soldiers, are going to take part in the military exercise where the two nations will exchange their experiences and information on disaster management, search and rescue, human assistance and more.

[Govt bringing provision to grant NRNs Nepali citizenship](#)

Onlinekhabar | 6th September

The government has opened the door to grant NRNs Nepali citizenship.

With the approval of the Citizenship Regulations by the Council of Ministers, provisions have been established to grant Nepali citizenship to non-resident Nepalis (NRNs), thereby opening up a pathway for NRNs to obtain citizenship. While the revised Citizenship Act received approval from President Ram Chandra Paudel in May, the corresponding regulations had not been established until recently. Sources told Onlinekhabar that the Cabinet meeting held on August 29 has now passed these regulations. However, the government has not officially released information regarding this development, resulting in a lack of detailed information regarding its specific provisions.

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