



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

August 11th, 2017| Volume: 3 - 03/8

[Afghan forces conducted 45 ground operations, 10 airstrikes, leaving 51 militants dead](#)

Khaama Press|10th August
The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) personnel conducted at least 45 ground operations and 10 airstrikes in the past 24 hours, leaving at least 51 militants dead. The Ministry of Defense (MoD) in its latest operational update said the operations were conducted in various provinces of the country with an aim to suppress the growing insurgency of the anti-government armed militant groups.

[Bank of China coming to Pakistan soon](#)

The News|11th August
Chairman of Gwadar Port Authority Dostain Jamaldeen has said that the branch of Bank of China will be opened in Gwadar soon, while the International Expo Center will be inaugurated in Gwadar by end of this year.

[Let's focus on concrete outcome: PM to Swaraj](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 11th August
Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has said Nepal and India should focus on result-oriented approach and work together for concrete outcome of various past understandings and pacts, including implementation of various India-funded projects in Nepal. During a meeting with India's Minister for External Affairs Sushma Swaraj on Thursday, PM Deuba said that the two countries have long been engaged in theoretical discussions and that time has come to turn past pacts and understandings into reality.

AFGHANISTAN

[Citizen and ARG debate focus on Electricity as key infrastructure in Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press|10th August

The second debate of Citizen and ARG debate focused on a key issue in Afghanistan forming the one of the key infrastructures playing an important role in the development of the country. The debate was organized by the Office of the Senior Presidential Advisor to UN Affairs Farkhunda Zahra Naderi

[Teenage boys arrested before joining ISIS ranks in East of Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press|10th August

At least four teenage boys were arrested by the Afghan security forces before joining the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group ranks as they were apparently lured by the fighters of the terror group.

[Optimism for Investments in Afghanistan Declines: Survey](#)

Outlook Afghanistan | 10th August

Agriculture is the only sector experiencing positive growth in the past three months of the current year. Recent studies by the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) show that problems facing local businesses continue and optimism for investments in the country has declined.

BANGLADESH

[Bangladesh Govt approves 320 industrial projects around Sundarbans](#)

Prothom Alo | 11th August

The National Committee on Environment has given the go-ahead to 320 industrial projects adjacent to the Sundarbans. The decision was taken on Sunday at the fourth meeting of the committee chaired by the prime minister Sheikh Hasina. It is illegal to set up such factories, particularly those with high pollution, near this world heritage site. A 10 km area surrounding the Sundarbans was declared an ecologically critical area (ECA) by the Ministry of Environment and Forests in 1999 as per section 5 of the Environment Conservation Act.

[Bangladesh ranks 10th in Global Slavery Index 2016](#)

The Financial Express | 11th August

Bangladesh has ranked 10th among 167 countries with over 1.5 million people or 0.95 per cent of the population living in absolute modern day slavery, according to Global Slavery Index 2016. As per the index, which ranks 167 countries, 58 per cent of 45.8 million slaves live in five countries -- India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Uzbekistan. This estimate reflects data from a random sample, nationally representative survey conducted by Walk Free Foundation in partnership with Gallup in 2015.

[Scrapping of 16th Amendment: Govt finds reasons unacceptable](#)

The Daily Star | 11th August

The grounds on which the Supreme Court scrapped the 16th amendment to the constitution are unacceptable to the government, Law Minister Anisul Huq said yesterday. He also claimed that the chief justice made derogatory comments on parliament and undermined it in the SC judgment in the 16th amendment case. "I want to say very humbly that the grounds on which the honourable Appellate Division [of the SC] cancelled the 16th amendment are not acceptable to us," he told a press conference at the Secretariat. The law minister came up with the government's formal reaction to the cancellation of the 16th amendment 10 days after the release of the full verdict.

[Dhaka, Bangkok to conduct feasibility study on FTA](#)

The Financial Express | 11th August

Bangladesh and Thailand will conduct a joint feasibility study on signing the proposed bilateral free trade agreement (FTA) between the countries for doubling two-way trade to US\$ 2.0 billion in next five years. The agreement in this connection came, among others, during the ministerial meeting of Joint Trade Committee

(JTC) of Bangladesh and Thailand at a city hotel on Thursday. Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed and his Thai counterpart Apiradi Tantraporn led the respective side.

BHUTAN

[BKP elects office bearers](#)

Kuensel Online | 10th August

Dasho Neten Zangmo, the former Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairperson, is now the President of the Bhutan Kuen-Nyam Party (BKP), formally. She was chosen by party members as President in May but was formally elected yesterday. She received 102 out of 104 votes that were cast to elect the party's office bearers. The founding President, Sonam Tobgay, was elected the Vice President. He was nominated by the President and received 104 votes from as many registered members who were present at the occasion. Thinley Dorji was elected as the General Secretary with 101 votes out of 104. The party's former General Secretary, Karma Jimba was elected as Treasurer. All elected office bearers were lone candidates.

MALDIVES

[MDP welcomes police progress in Yaamin's murder investigation](#)

Sun Online | 10th August

Largest opposition party, MDP, has congratulated the police in the success in the investigation into the murder of the blogger, Yaamin Rasheed. Police revealed information on the suspects involved in the attack yesterday at a press conference at Iskandharu Koshi. Praising the success of the police, the Vice President of MDP, Mohamed Shifaaz said that the police have the latest technology and work hard in their training.

MYANMAR

[March of democracy unstoppable in Myanmar'](#)

Mizzima | 11th August

The march of democracy is unstoppable in Myanmar, despite obvious challenges, says Myanmar's information minister Dr Pe Myint. In an exclusive interview to Mizzima on the eve of the 'Forum for Myanmar's democratic transition,' Dr Myint said his government was not playing down challenges, some of which he described as 'formidable'. "But at a time when democracy is threatened in many countries where it had struck roots or emerged as fledgling movements, Myanmar is trying hard to move ahead," Dr Myint said. Asked if the military was playing ball, Dr Myint said the army is committed to taking forward democratic progress and "there was no reason to doubt that."

[Aung San Suu Kyi confident non-ceasefire signatories will join NCA](#)

Mizzima | 11th August

Myanmar State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi has expressed strong belief that the non-signatory armed groups to the Nationwide Ceasefire Accord (NCA) would sign the peace pact during the upcoming third 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference, according to Chairman of the Peace Commission Tin Myo Win Thursday, Xinhua reported on 10 August. The peace commission Thursday held the 4th formal meeting with the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), represented by the Delegation of Political Negotiation (DPN) at the National Reconciliation and Peace Center (NRPC) here.

NEPAL

[PM vows to help combat terrorism](#)

The Himalayan Times | 11th August

Two decades after the establishment of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), member states of the region have shown willingness to elevate the visibility of the BIMSTEC by concluding crucial agreements. The 15th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting of the member states (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand) scheduled for tomorrow is expected to give final shape to a number of agreements planned under the BIMSTEC — namely, Free Trade Agreements, Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection, and MoU on BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility — paving the way for their submission during the fourth summit of the BIMSTEC.

[PM's India visit: Follow-up on deals high on agenda](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 11th August

Implementation of past pacts and several pending bilateral issues is expected to figure prominently during Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's upcoming visit to India along with discussions on strengthening bilateral ties, according to officials. Prime Minister Deuba will begin his five-day visit to the southern neighbour on August 23, his first foreign trip after being elected the prime minister a fourth time two months ago. Officials involved in preparing the agenda for the visit said several bilateral issues which have been stuck at the bureaucratic level will be raised at the top political level.

PAKISTAN

[Sharif's rally exposes cracks in PML-N Rawalpindi](#)

Dawn | 11th August

Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif may have resumed his rally from Rawalpindi on Thursday, but his short stay in the city and subsequent departure exposed divisions and a lack of coordination within the ruling party's local chapter.

[Petition filed in Islamabad High Court for Khawaja Asif's disqualification](#)

Dawn | 11th August

An activist of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), Mohammad Usman Dar, on Thursday filed a petition in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) seeking disqualification of Foreign Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif.

[Sindh's National Accountability Ordinance Repeal Act challenged in apex court](#)

Dawn | 10th August

The Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan on Thursday received a petition against the controversial law repealing the National Accountability Ordinance (NAO) 1999 passed in Sindh. The law, which ends the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) powers to act against employees of the Sindh government, had come into effect just hours previous to the filing of the petition.

[Sharif calls ouster 'insult to voters'](#)

The Express Tribune | 10th August

A defiant Nawaz Sharif on Thursday criticised the judiciary for forcing him to quit as prime minister, saying it was an 'insult' to 200 million people of Pakistan that their elected leader was unceremoniously ousted with a single stroke of pen.

SRI LANKA

[Sri Lanka Foreign Minister Ravi Katunayake resigns](#)

Colombo Page | 10th August

Sri Lanka's Foreign Affairs Minister Ravi Katunayake today resigned from his portfolio after allegations surfaced that he indirectly benefitted from the Central Bank Treasury Bond scam. The Minister making a special statement in Parliament this afternoon said that a he took this decision to maintain the respect and the dignity of parliament and the government. Karunanayake said his name is linked to the Central Bank bond issue and he took the decision to resign for the sake of his party, the country, his party members and for a new political culture.

[Sri Lankan military officers on study tour in Rwanda](#)

Colombo Page | 10th August

A delegation of students and staff from the Sri Lanka Defense Service Command and Staff College is visiting Rwanda for a two-week geo-strategic international study tour. Rwanda Defense Forces' Air force Chief of Staff Brig Gen Charles Karamba welcomed the head of the visiting Sri Lankan military delegation Colonel Kithsiri Ekanayake to the RDF Headquarters at Kimihurura in Kigali on Thursday. After visiting Kigali Genocide Memorial, the 16-person delegation headed to the Ministry of Defense where they were briefed on the roles and functions of Rwanda Defense Forces, the New Times reported.

[IMF calls for more public awareness on tax reforms in Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Gazette | 11th August

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has called for more public awareness on the need for tax reforms in Sri Lanka. In its country report on Sri Lanka, the IMF notes that VAT reforms introduced in 2016, including the tax rate increase from 11 per cent to 15 per cent and the removal of number of exemptions, despite the stiff opposition by some segments in the society, signify the authorities' commitment to reforms under the ongoing revenue based fiscal consolidation process.

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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