



FOCUS:
Neighbourhood

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

July 12th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 5/7

[Ghani Says 'Peace with Pakistan before Taliban'](#)

Outlook Afghanistan /Tolonews | 12th July

The president said that Pakistan needs to stop interfering in Afghanistan's affairs and start cooperating with government. President Ashraf Ghani said at a press conference on Tuesday that Afghanistan needs peace with Pakistan before peace can be forged with the Taliban. He said Pakistan also needs to stop interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs and instead cooperate with the National Unity Government (NUG). Ghani stated that Afghanistan and Pakistan have so far not finalized the memorandum of understanding on the exchange of intelligence.

[ADB to finance \\$ 1202m for Bangladesh corridor road project](#)

The Financial Express | 11th July
Asian Development Bank is likely to finance \$ 1202 million for Dhaka-Northwest international trade corridor project. The government has taken a plan to start the project titled 'South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Dhaka-Northwest Corridor Road Project, Phase 2', said an official at the Economic Relations Division (ERD) The phase-2 of SASEC Road Connectivity project will improve the next portion of the Dhaka-Northwest international trade corridor -- from Elenga through Hatikamural to Rangpur.

[Military urge government to take action against Yangon Chief Minister](#)

Mizzima | 12th July
The Myanmar Army has filed a complaint with the government to take necessary action against Yangon Chief Minister of Yangon Region Phyto Min Thein over remarks the minister made concerning the head of the military. The Office of the Commander in Chief released a statement on Tuesday night to ask the government to take necessary action against Phyto Min Thein for delivering recent remarks concerning the Commander in Chief.

AFGHANISTAN

['Caretaker issue resolves within six months'](#)

Afghanistan Times | 11th July

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani on Tuesday said that 'caretaker problems will be resolved in all governmental

organs' within next six months. Briefing newsmen in Kabul, President Ghani said that those who have suggestion for reforms have to be shared with the government for its follow up. The call to resolve caretaker problems come after Wolesi Jirga or Lower House of Parliament often criticized government for not introducing new candidates for the ministries running by caretakers. They lawmakers repeatedly asked President Ghani to introduce new nominees as soon as possible to the parliament.

[Coin flipped: Pakistan to choose war or economic route: Ghani](#)

Afghanistan Times | 11th July

President Ashraf Ghani on Tuesday said the regional and international opportunities favor Afghanistan, it's time for Pakistan to choose an opportunity or it's opposite. Stable Afghanistan is in the interest of Islamabad and in the region as well. Addressing a press conference at Presidential Palace, President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, said: "There was a time when Pakistan was considering Afghanistan as a marginal state with a common perception that if Torkham, Spin Boldak or Karchi crossing points were closed, Afghans would be groaning and Afghanistan would be easily isolated, but now the situations have been changed in favor of Afghanistan by opening new trade routes which puts an end to the only dependence on Pakistan's ports."

BANGLADESH

[Bangladesh plans to meet 10pc electricity need from solar power by 2020](#)

The Financial Express | 11th July

Bangladesh is planning to set up some large-scale solar power projects to generate 2000 megawatts (MW) of electricity in three years. The country looks to diversify its energy mix and enhance self-sufficiency in the energy sector. "We are working to increase power generation from renewable sources at a faster phase so it would meet at least 10.0 per cent of the total demand for electricity in 2020," State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid said.

[Export to India drops after two years](#)

The Financial Express | 12th July

The country's merchandise export to India dropped in the past fiscal year, according to the latest statistics released by Export Promotion Bureau (EPB). Annual export to India stood at \$672.4 million in FY17 which was \$689.62 million in FY16. Thus, export to India declined by 2.49 per cent during the period under review.

[Media reports on Swiss bank deposit rise exaggerated: Finance Minister Muhith](#)

UNB/ Prothom Alo | 12th July

Finance minister AMA Muhith on Tuesday dismissed the recent media reports on the capital outflow from Bangladesh and a sharp rise in Bangladeshis' deposits in Swiss banks, reports UNB. "I won't say no money is sent out of the country. But the amount as reported by the media can be considered exaggerated in reality," he told parliament giving a statement under the rule-300 of the rules of procedure.

BHUTAN

[Bhutan Telecom board decides not to suspend CEO](#)

Kuensel Online | 11th July

Following a request from Bhutan Telecom's management board, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has decided not to suspend the chief executive officer (CEO) of Bhutan Telecom Limited, Tshewang Gyeltshen, while the court proceedings are underway. The commission on June 21 wrote to the BT board to suspend Tshewang Gyeltshen after the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) charged 11 individuals in court for alleged fraudulent registration and encroachment of 1.37 acres of government land in Tshalumaphey, Thimphu about 17 years ago.

[Job plan designed to address youth unemployment](#)

Kuensel Online | 11th July

With youth unemployment hovering at 10.7, about 19,363 jobseekers expected to come into the labour market annually as per the jobseekers projection, labour ministry is all set to implement Job Plan 2017-2018 designed to address the unemployment issue. The officials claim it is estimated that of the expected 19,363 jobseekers in 2017-2018 financial year, about 8,162 jobseekers will be absorbed through normal economic activities and about 4,100 through ministry's different school-to-work transition programmes such as skilling, trainings, and internships.

MALDIVES

[Falaah: MVR 32 million was offered to sign against Maseeh](#)

Sun Online | 11th June

Deputy Leader of the PPM Parliamentary Group, the MP for the Inguraidhoo constituency, Ibrahim Falaah has said that he was offered MVR 32 million to sign the no confidence against the Speaker of the Parliament, Abdulla Maseeh. Speaking at a government coalition press conference at Dharubaaruge today, MP Falaah said that most of the MPs that have signed the motion against the Speaker have done so for their own benefit and not all due to an problems with the Speaker.

[Judge Adam Arif appointed temporary Head of Criminal Court](#)

Sun Online | 11th June

Criminal Court has been temporarily put in the care of Judge Adam Arif. The Chief Judge of the Criminal Court was Judge Abdul Baaree Yoosuf until a meeting of the Judicial Service last night which transferred Judge Baaree to the Juvenile Court. And Judge Shakeel was transferred from the Criminal Court to the Family Court. Information Official of the Criminal Court confirmed to Sun Media that Judge Adam Arif has been put in charge of the Criminal Court temporarily.

MYANMAR

[Landmark study on gender in media launched](#)

Mizzima | 12th July

Media is a well proven tool to advance gender equality. But most often women are portrayed through stereotypes and global studies show that only 24 per cent of the voices used in media and news items stem from women. With support from International Media Support and Fojo Media Institute, The Myanmar Women's Journalists Society

(MWJS) is piloting the first study of its kind looking at how women and men are portrayed in media - in the pursuit of greater gender equality in Myanmar.

[Concern voiced over blocking of visas for UN fact-finding team](#)

Mizzima | 12th July

Human Rights Watch has expressed concern over the Myanmar government refusing to grant visas to members of a United Nations fact-finding mission. The government of Myanmar said on June 30 that it would not grant visas to members of a commission appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council to investigate human rights violations by the country's state security forces, including the recent alleged abuses in Rakhine State.

NEPAL

[Oli, Thapa discuss contemporary issues](#)

RSS/ My Republica | 11th July

CPN-UML chair KP Sharma Oli and Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) Chair Kamal Thapa held a meeting Tuesday to discuss the country's contemporary political issues. During the meeting that took place at the UML's parliamentary party office, Singha Durbar, the two leaders, reviewing the recently held local-level elections, discussed on the matters of holding the provincial and central elections on time.

[Civil servants' 1,400 trips cost taxpayers over Rs 1b](#)

My Republica | 12th July

Government employees have spent over a billion rupees on foreign visits in the last two months. The bill includes over 1,400 trips of civil servants since May 18 this year. Some of the visits are scheduled to take place in the next few weeks.

PAKISTAN

[Pakistan's trade deficit touches new height, stands at \\$32.6b](#)

Express Tribune | 12th July

Pakistan booked a record trade deficit of \$32.6 billion in the last fiscal year after exports nosedived to a six-year low while imports surged to a historical level of \$53 billion, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Tuesday. The government missed all of its trade sector targets for fiscal year 2016-17 that ended on June 30, which adversely affected its current account deficit projection and official foreign currency reserves. This also puts a question mark over the projections made at the time of budget making every year.

[Chinese delegation arrives to review CPEC progress](#)

Express Tribune | 12th July

A high level Chinese delegation arrived on a four-day visit to Pakistan to discuss industrial cooperation, implementation of Gwadar projects and Pakistan Railways' up-gradation of Main Line-1 under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The delegation consisted of senior officials from National Development

and Reform Commission, National Railway Administration, Chinese investors and representatives of China EXIM Bank and China Development Bank.

[Pakistan to set up climate centre in Saudi Arabia](#)

Express Tribune| 12th July

Pakistan is all set to send its two climate change experts to Saudi Arabia to help it establish a climate change centre and numerical model of predictions of severe weather. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoyed exemplary working relationships in the field of weather and climate. A lot of manpower has served in the past as weather observers and forecaster in the Gulf country. "However, it is for the first time that climate change experts from Pakistan will serve in the Saudi Meteorological Agency. Saudi Arabia is a potential candidate to be the Regional Climate Centre for West Asia for WMO," said Pakistan Meteorological Department chief Dr Ghulam Rasul, while talking to The Express Tribune.

SRILANKA

[New Army Commander sets out plans to raise standards of Sri Lanka Army to fit country's current needs](#)

Colombo Page| 11th July

The new Commander of Sri Lanka Army, Lieutenant General Mahesh Senanayake has set out his vision and future roles of the Army to elevate the organization to meet the required modern standards considering the country's current needs. Formally meeting with Commander-In-Chief President Maithripala Sirisena today at the Presidential Secretariat after assuming office as the 22nd Commander of the Army, Lieutenant General Mahesh Senanayake informed the President that he has already set out his vision and future roles of the Army underlining the need to throw the Army's full weight behind the development of the country.

[Report submitted on restructuring fines for road rule violations](#)

Colombo Gazette| 11th July

The final report on the fairness of increasing of the amount of fines for violation of road rules, formulated by a committee appointed by President Maithripala Sirisena, was handed over to the President today at the Presidential Secretariat. Secretary to the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation Nihal Somaweera presented the report to the President. The budget proposal -2017 suggested the minimum fine for violating road rules to increase to Rs. 25,000, with the objective of preventing road accidents.

['Sri Lanka Economic Summit 2017' to discuss 'Transforming the Economy through Technology'](#)

Colombo Page| 12th July

The Sri Lanka Economic Summit 2017 organized by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce will conduct a dedicated thematic session to discuss how Sri Lanka can transform its economy through the adoption of technology. The session titled 'Transforming the Economy through Technology,' will line up the likes of Prof. Rohan Samarjiva, founding Chair of LIRNEasia, Mr. Kamal Quadir, Chief Executive Officer of Bkash Limited, Prof. Ajith De Alwis, Project Director of Coordinating Secretariat for Science, Technology and Innovation, Mr Gehan Dias, General Manager, of MillenniumIT, Mr. Samantha Ranatunga, Managing Director of CIC Holdings PLC and Ms. Linda Speldewinde, Founder of the Academy Of Design. Mr. Dumindra Ratnayake, Chairman of Martin & George (Pvt) Limited will moderate the session.

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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