



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

**June 14th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 6/6**

[China to Mediate between Afghanistan, Pakistan](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Pajhwok | 14th June  
China for the first time wants to mediate between Afghanistan and Pakistan and in this regard Chinese foreign minister is scheduled to visit Kabul in near future, President Ashraf Ghani has said. Talking to a group of female civil society activists at the Presidential Place a day earlier, the president likened May 31 truck bombing in Kabul with the 9/11 in the US. He said his government had started the Kabul Process to build global consensus but the enemy was trying to increase domestic problems in Afghanistan in order to scuttle the process.

[Panama Papers JIT levels startling allegations against govt, seeks strict court action](#)

Dawn | 14th June  
The joint investigation team (JIT) probing allegations of money laundering against the Sharif family has made startling allegations accusing government institutions and departments of tampering records, creating obstacles in the probe and even threatening members of the six-member team. In a damning application filed with the apex court earlier this week, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, the JIT informed the Supreme Court about the various challenges they have been facing in concluding the investigation within the stipulated two-month timeframe.

[India and Sri Lanka look to break deadlock on fishing issue](#)

Colombo Gazette | 11th June  
Foreign Minister Ravi Karunanayake and Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj last week had talks on the contentious fishing issue. Foreign Ministry sources said that Swaraj had assured the Minister that funds are being allocated to assist Indian fishermen in deep sea fishing so they can avoid Sri Lankan waters. Several rounds of talks between Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen have so far failed to result in a final solution to the issue. Swaraj last month held a meeting in New Delhi to discuss the issues on the frequent arrest of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lanka Navy and also alleged confiscation of the boats.

**AFGHANISTAN**

[Developments made in Kabul and Kandahar bombings probe: ARG](#)

Khaama Press | 14th June

The Afghan intelligence chief and the Attorney General have informed regarding the developments achieved during the ongoing probe regarding the recent deadly attacks in Kabul city and the deadly Kandahar bombing. The Office of the President, ARG Palace, said the National Security Council (NSC) meeting was organized in the ARG Palace today and was chaired by President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani to discuss regarding the ongoing situation and latest developments in the security sector. The statement further added that the Attorney General Farid Hamidi presented the latest developments made in the probe regarding the recent deadly Kabul bombings. The recent attacks in Kabul late in May and earlier this month left more than 150 dead and hundreds of others wounded.

#### [Afghanistan Wants Durable Peace with Pakistan: Ghani](#)

Khaama Press/ Pajhwok | 14th June

President Ashraf Ghani said on Tuesday a roadmap to peace had been charted out as Afghanistan desired durable peace with Pakistan. The president said this during a consultative meeting with university teachers and students, who called on him at the Presidential Palace. Prof. Esmatullah Usmani and Prof. Javed Siddique spoke on behalf of the teachers and students. They expressed their condolences over the recent killing of innocent people in terrorist attacks. The praised the president's initiative of consultations with different groups of society and said unity and education could steer the country out of crisis.

#### [Mattis Says Options on Afghanistan to be Presented to Trump 'Very Soon'](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Reuters | 14th June

U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said on Monday he would present options on Afghanistan to President Donald Trump "very soon," adding the strategy would take a regional approach rather than looking at the war-torn country in isolation. The situation in Afghanistan, which U.S. military officials acknowledge is in a stalemate almost 16 years since the war started, has deteriorated in recent months. A truck-bomb explosion in Kabul last month killed more than 150 people, making it the deadliest attack in the Afghan capital since the ouster of the Taliban in 2001.

## **BANGLADESH**

#### [China seeks to convert part of soft loans into commercial credit for Bangladesh](#)

bdnews24 | 13<sup>th</sup> June

China has asked Bangladesh to convert part of the credit it promised during its president's Dhaka visit to commercial loans. Converting soft loans into commercial credit means Bangladesh will have to pay higher interest for the fund. Bangladesh signed \$25 billion deals with China for nearly two and a half dozen projects during President Xi Jinping's visit to Dhaka in October last year. Li Guangjun, economic and commercial counsellor at the Chinese Embassy in Dhaka, made the proposal during a recent meeting of the Joint Economic Council, according to a senior official at the Economic Relations Division or ERD.

#### [Export to Germany crosses \\$5 billion](#)

The Financial Express | 13<sup>th</sup> June

Bangladesh's merchandise export to Germany crossed \$5 billion level during the first 11 months of the current fiscal year (FY17). Official statistics, released by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), showed that total export to Germany stood at \$5.04 billion in July-May period of the current fiscal year.

### [Dhaka summons US diplomat to protest arrest of envoy](#)

Reuters / Prothom Alo | 14<sup>th</sup> June

Bangladesh's foreign ministry summoned a United States diplomat on Tuesday to express dismay over the arrest of the country's deputy consul general in New York on charges of labour trafficking and assault. The deputy consul general Mohammed Shaheldul Islam was indicted on Monday on charges of using threats and intimidation to force his servant to work without pay, a New York City prosecutor said. Islam has limited diplomatic immunity and was ordered to surrender his passport when he appeared in court, said Queens District Attorney Richard Brown in a statement.

### [Worn-out roads are causing accidents: Khaleda Zia](#)

bdnews24 | 14<sup>th</sup> June

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has blamed the government for countless deaths in road accidents. Awami League General Secretary and Road Transport Minister Obaidul Quader has recently claimed that the conditions of roads and highways are good. The BNP chief dismissed the claim while speaking at an iftar party on Tuesday.

## **BHUTAN**

### [His Majesty The King grants an Audience to the Director General of the Border Roads Organisation of India](#)

Kuenselonline | 14<sup>th</sup> June

His Majesty The King granted an Audience to the Director General of the Border Roads Organisation of India, Lt Gen SK Shrivastava yesterday. The Border Roads Organisation (BRO), besides developing and maintaining roads along the Indian border, also offers these services to friendly neighbouring countries. In Bhutan, BRO works through Project DANTAK, and has assisted in major infrastructure development since 1961.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Maldives in talks with two African nations for diplomatic relations](#)

Sun Online | 12<sup>th</sup> June

Maldives has held discussions with two countries in the African continent to establish diplomatic relations. As Maldives working to get elected on the UN Security Council for 2019-2020, the Maldivian Ambassadors have been meeting with the diplomats in their resident countries. And so the Maldivian Ambassador for Saudi Arabia, Abdulla Hameed met the Ambassador for Saudi Arabia from the Republic of Chad and the Ambassador for Saudi from Cameroon today in two separate meetings.

### [Parliament approves UAE investments in Maldives](#)

Sun Online | 13<sup>th</sup> June

The Maldivian Parliament has approved an investment agreement of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the Maldives. The investment needed the approval as per Article 115 of the Constitution since the investment carries a responsibility on the part of the people.

## **MYANMAR**

### [Daw Aung San Suu Kyi Says UN Probe Would Increase Rakhine Tensions](#)

Reuters/The Irrawaddy | 13<sup>th</sup> June

A UN probe into alleged human rights abuses by Myanmar's military against the minority Rohingya people last year would inflame ethnic tensions, the country's de-facto leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said on Monday. Last month, the UN appointed experts to lead a fact-finding mission to investigate widespread allegations of killings, rape and torture by security forces against the Rohingya, a Muslim minority who have faced discrimination in largely Buddhist Myanmar for generations. Myanmar has rejected the mission.

## NEPAL

### [Nepal-India border in Kanchanpur to be sealed for 48 hours during local elections](#)

Rastriya Samachar Samiti / The Himalayan Times | 13<sup>th</sup> June

The Nepal-India border points in Kanchanpur district would remain closed for 48 hours during the upcoming local level elections slated for June 28. A meeting of the Nepal-India Coordination Committee held in Mahendranagar on Monday agreed to seal the border points from 6:00 am of June 26 to 5:00 pm of June 28, said the Chief District Officer Manohar Prasad Khanal.

### [Ruling parties propose deferring polls yet again](#)

My Republica | 14<sup>th</sup> June

Arguing that it would be difficult to hold the second phase local elections without bringing the agitating Rastriya Janata Party Nepal (RJPN) on board, the government has indirectly proposed deferring the polls now scheduled for June 28. During a meeting of top leaders of the major political parties held at Singha Durbar on Tuesday, ruling party top leaders circuitously proposed deferring the polls, citing various problems in holding the election if RJPN is not on board.

## PAKISTAN

### [Pakistan shelves \\$2b LNG project](#)

Express Tribune | 14th June

As Saudi Arabia adopts an aggressive policy in the Middle East by cutting ties with Qatar, the PML-N-led government has shelved the \$2 billion Gwadar-Nawabshah pipeline project, an alternative plan to implement Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project following US sanctions against Tehran, in a move that will likely intensify row between Islamabad and Tehran on the gas pipeline project. Qatar and Iran had been competing to provide gas to Pakistan. The United States (US) had been pushing Pakistan to shelve the IP gas pipeline project and asking it to sign an LNG deal.

### [Pakistan eyes 2018 start for China-funded Diamer-Bhasha dam](#)

Express Tribune | 14th June

Pakistan expects China to fund a long-delayed Indus river mega dam project in Gilgit-Baltistan with work beginning next year, Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal said in an interview with Reuters. Pakistan has been keen for years to build a cascade of mega dams along the Indus flowing down from the Himalayas, but has struggled to raise money from international institutions amid opposition from its nuclear-armed neighbour India.

### [PM's visit yields no breakthrough in resolution of Saudi-Qatar row](#)

Dawn | 14th June

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's mediation visit to Saudi Arabia for finding a diplomatic solution to the Qatar crisis did not achieve any immediate breakthrough. Mr Sharif returned to Islamabad in the early hours of Tuesday after a day-long visit to Jeddah, where he met King Salman bin Abdul Aziz and urged an early resolution of "the impasse in Gulf ... in the best interest of Ummah". According to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), King Salman and Mr Sharif discussed the "latest regional developments" in addition to bilateral relations.

## SRILANKA

### [TN CM tells Modi to secure release of boats in Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Gazette | 13th June

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Tuesday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take immediate diplomatic measures with the authorities in Sri Lanka and arrange for an early release of the 135 fishing boats and 11 fishermen currently in neighbouring island nation's custody, the Deccan Chronicle reported. In a letter to Modi, Palaniswami said that 135 fishing boats belonging to fishermen from Tamil Nadu, of which 61 were apprehended in 2015, 53 were apprehended in 2016 and 21 were apprehended in 2017, continue to remain impounded in Sri Lankan custody.

### [President wants transparency in distribution of foreign aid](#)

Colombo Gazette | 13th June

President Maithripala Sirisena has given instructions to officials to expedite the programme to build new houses for the affected people in the recent disastrous situation. Furthermore, the President said that five billion rupees from the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, which is under the purview of President Sirisena will be donated to this programme. Cabinet approval was received to pay a monthly rental of Rs. 7,500 for three months for the families whose houses were fully destroyed, to live elsewhere until their houses were rebuilt. The President gave these instructions while participating in a progress review meeting of the Post Disaster Management, held at the Presidential Secretariat, today.

### [Sri Lankan detained in Mumbai attempting to smuggle gold](#)

Colombo Gazette | 12th June

A Sri Lankan passport holder, Mohamed Sufiyan Nizamdeen has been arrested in Mumbai while he was attempting to smuggle gold into the country. Nizamdeen, 43, was intercepted based on profiling on arrival from Colombo by SriLankan Airline flight UL 141 in the Arrivals hall after he cleared himself through the Green Channel, The Hindu newspaper reported. Nizamdeen, from Kandy, had been caught smuggling last month. He was booked and issued a summons as per procedure as amount of gold being smuggled was below Indian Rs 20 lakh in value.

## ***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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