



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

July 14th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 6/7

[Myanmar opens arms for the first foreign company to build an oil and gas supply base](#)

Mizzima | 13th July
MOSB Limited (MOSB), has received approval from the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) on 11 July, 2017 to build and operate a supply base in Mon State, with the endorsement from the Ministry of Energy. The establishment of a supply base will support the fast-growing oil and gas industry in Myanmar and provide necessary infrastructure, health, education and employment opportunities to those in the region. This will further advance the industry by reducing travel distances and increasing efficiency.

[Srilankan turns Chinese to boost rapidly growing market](#)

Colombo Gazette | 13th July
SriLankan Airlines announced it has enhanced its services for customers in China with the launch of a local direct-dial number for the airline's customers throughout China recently, which will connect them directly with Mandarin-speaking customer service staff at its Global Contact Centre. SriLankan now provides local direct-dial services in a number of languages for customers to make inquiries regarding a wide range of services that include flight schedule queries, ticketing and reservations and FlySmiLes frequent flyer information.

[US, Afghan officials discuss ongoing situation including new political coalition](#)

Khaama Press | 13th July
The Special Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of the United States Hugo Llorens and the second deputy chief executive Haji Mohammad Mohaqq met in Kabul to discuss a wide range of issues, including the formation of the new political front. The Office of the second deputy chief executive in a statement said the meeting between the two sides continued for almost two hours. The statement further added that the ongoing political and security situation, national unity government agreement implementation, peace process, upcoming elections of the parliament and districts councils along with the presidential elections, fight against corruption, and other issues were discussed during the meeting.

AFGHANISTAN

[Afghan Govt Signs \\$482.3m New Financing with WB](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/Pajhwok | 13th July

The Ministry of Finance on Wednesday signed a financing package of \$482.3 million in grants with the World Bank to help the country alleviate poverty. The signing signaled a long-term commitment by both parties to Afghanistan's and its people's development, the MoF said in a statement. It said the package would help Afghanistan support communities with refugees, expand private-sector opportunities for the poor, boost development of five cities, expand electrification, improve food security and build rural roads.

[Violations along Durand Line Discussed During High Level Defense Meeting](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/KP | 13th July

The violations along the Durand Line was on the agenda of the high level defense meeting chaired by President Mohamamd Ashraf Ghani where other issues related the security were discussed. The Office of the President, ARG Palace, said the meeting of the commander in chief of the armed forces chaired by President Ghani focused on the security situation of northern and northeastern provinces of the country, including Takhar, Badakhshan, Faryab, Kunduz, and Uruzgan. A statement by the ARG Palace said the meeting focused on the security upheavals and situation of the named provinces and the relevant authorities were instructed to take necessary measures for the betterment of the security.

[Turkmenistan Gas Pipeline to Reach Afghanistan Borders Soon](#)

Outlook Afghanistan / Tolonews| 13th July

The gas pipeline network will be established in Torghundi border town in Herat, aimed at enabling Afghan businessmen to purchase the Turkmenistan imported gas. President Ashraf Ghani's advisor on Central Asian countries' affairs, Mohammad Shakir Kargar, on Wednesday said Turkmenistan's natural gas pipeline will arrive at Torghundi border town in Herat province in the near future. The Afghan businessmen would be able to purchase the gas from the pipeline in the port, Kargar said.

BANGLADESH

[Sri Lanka proud partner of Bangabandhu's Bangladesh, says President Sirisena](#)

bdnews24 | 13th July

Sri Lanka's president has paid tribute to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, saying his country is a proud partner of the Bangladesh he envisioned. President Maithripala Sirisena visited the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi after arriving in Dhaka for a three-day visit on Thursday. Sri Lanka is "proud to be a friend and partner in achieving Bangabandhu's vision of a peaceful and prosperous region," wrote Sirisena as he signed the visitors' book of the museum dedicated to the nation's father.

[Suspension of VAT to reduce revenue collection by Tk 200b: PM Hasina](#)

Prothom Alo | 13th July

Prime minister Sheikh Hasina on Thursday said the suspension of the uniform 15 per cent VAT will bring down the revenue collection by Tk 200 billion in the current fiscal year, reports UNB. "The postponement of the VAT law will result in the reduction of Tk 200 billion of the targeted revenue as we've formulated our budget considering the new rate," she said. The PM was delivering her winding-up speech in parliament.

[Dhaka signs initial deal with Doha to import 2.5m tonnes of LNG a yr](#)

The Financial Express | 14th July

Bangladesh inked Thursday the country's first-ever deal to import from Qatar liquefied natural gas (LNG), a new

fuel for the country, to meet the mounting natural gas demand. Qatar's RasGas and Bangladesh's state-owned Petrobangla signed the long-awaited initial deal at Petrocentre in the city over import of around 2.5 million tonne per year of lean LNG for 15 years, a senior Petrobangla official told the FE.

BHUTAN

[ECB prepares for 2018 elections](#)

Kuensel | 13th July

The two newly formed political parties, Druk Gaki Tshogpa and Druk Kuenphen Tshogpa, are yet to register with the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB). According to ECB, the promoters of the political parties are in the process of carrying out preparatory work such as mobilising members and support. Citing Rule 3.3 of the Political Parties Rules and Regulations 2015, ECB clarified that an applicant party will enjoy the rights and privileges of a political party under the Constitution only after it is registered and notified so by the Registrar of political parties.

MALDIVES

[Billion dollar trade discussions in two days at TTM Fair](#)

Sun Online | 13th July

Organizers of the Travel Trade Maldives (TTM) Fair has said that 3,000 trade discussions have been held in the first two days of the fair with over a billion dollars worth of trade deals discussed. TTM is an international trade fair organized by the Maldivian PR company, Maldives Getaways. In the fair opened yesterday, 3,000 meetings were pre-arranged. Leading companies in the Maldivian tourism sector are taking part in the fair this year. There are over 100 international hoteliers and over 150 travel agents and tour operators are taking taking part in the business meets at the TTM Fair

[Position leader agree to elect MPs who lose their seats](#)

Sun Online | 14th July

Following the Supreme Court ruling today, the leaders of the coalition has agreed to elect the MPs who lose their seat, in the by-election. The opposition leaders in agreement are the former Presidents Maumoon Abdul Gayoom and Mohamed Nasheed along with the President of Adhaalath Party, Imran Abdulla and the Leader of Jumhooree Party (JP), Qasim Ibrahim.

MYANMAR

[Minister calls for illegal timber trade law to be enforced](#)

Mizzima | 14th July

A member of parliament urged the Union government to enforce the laws against the illegal trade of timber in Myanmar during Pyithu Hluttaw session, state media reported on 14 July. MP U Kyaw Aung Lwin read a statement that said the country's illegal timber trade was a large-scale problem that is rife with corruption. Village administrators and township-level officials often face pressure to offer protection to illegal traders, the MP said.

NEPAL

[PM directs chief sec'y to end foreign junkets](#)

My Republica | 14th July

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Thursday instructed newly-appointed Chief Secretary Rajendra Kishor Kshetri to bar top bureaucrats and other officials from going abroad to attend 'unnecessary' events. Deuba directed the chief secretary to bar the bureaucrats from unnecessary foreign visits immediately after appointing Kshetri to the helm of the bureaucracy.

[Rs 4 bn budget unveiled for Pokhara-Lekhnath Metropolitan City](#)

Himalayan News Service / The Himalayan Times | 14th July

Pokhara-Lekhnath Metropolitan City has unveiled a budget of Rs 4 billion for the fiscal 2017-18. Mayor of the metropolis Man Bahadur GC unveiled the budget during the first meeting of the municipal council today. The budget estimates collection of Rs 1.82 billion from conditional and unconditional grants and Rs 2.21 billion from revenues and taxes.

PAKISTAN

[Distorting Pak-China relations: Investigation ordered into 'anonymous letter'](#)

Express Tribune | 14th July

Acting Speaker of the National Assembly, Murtaza Javed Abbasi, on Thursday issued directives to immediately investigate an anonymous letter sent to the parliamentarians whose content could highly distort Pakistan and China relations. The anonymous letter was delivered to the parliamentarians residing in the Parliament Lodges in which extreme negative propaganda was made about Pakistan and China relations.

[Congress tightening screws on US aid to Pakistan](#)

Dawn | 14th July

A key Congressional panel started hearing a proposal on Thursday to make US civil and military aid to Pakistan conditional to Islamabad's support to the fight against the Afghan Taliban. The tougher language on Pakistan forms part of the 2018 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations draft bill, which was distributed among the members of the House Appropriations Committee on Wednesday. The draft continues current requirements regarding assistance for Pakistan but prevents the Secretary of State from giving a full national-interest waiver.

[China pushes Pakistan on Special Economic Zones](#)

Dawn | 14th July

While Pakistan is yet to form a group of experts to decide setting up of the exact number and types of special economic zones (SEZs) along the CPEC route in the first phase, China has notified the government of forming the group. During the last meeting of the Pak-China Joint Cooperation Committee (PCJCC) held in Beijing, setting up of nine SEZs had been prioritised. It had been decided that the two countries would set up expert groups to deliberate how to build the priority zones.

SRILANKA

[Bangladesh warmly welcomes Sri Lankan President arrived on state visit](#)

Colombo Page| 13th July

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena arrived in Dhaka Thursday on a three-day State Visit to Bangladesh at the invitation of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received a grand welcome at the Dhaka International Airport. President of Bangladesh Mohamed Abdul Hamid warmly welcomed the Sri Lankan President at the Dhaka International Airport. The President was accorded a guard of honor with 21-gun salute.

[Sri Lanka's industrial production index up 2.3 percent in May 2017](#)

Colombo Page| 14th July

According to the monthly Index of industrial Production (IIP) released by the Census and Statistics Department, the volume of industrial production in Sri Lanka has increased by 2.3 percent in May 2017 compared to the same month in 2016. Among the manufacturing industries, volume of products of Fabricated Metal Product increased by 21.6, furniture 15.4% and Basic metal products 14.0% during the month of May, 2017 compared to that of May, 2016 while the volume of food products has increased marginally by 0.1 %.

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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