



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

July 17th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 7/7

[Ex-Afghan intelligence chief announces the formation of new political party](#)

Khaama Press | 16th July
The former chief of the Afghan intelligence, National Directorate of Security (NDS), Rahmatullah Nabil, announced regarding the formation of a new political party. Speaking during a gathering in Kabul, Nabil said the new political party has been established under the name of Mehwar. Nabil further added that fight against discrimination is among the top perspectives of Mehwar political party. According to Nabil, the leadership council of Mehwar party consists of 74 members. In other parts of his speech during the gathering, Nabil said the party will never support the collapse of the current government in power.

[800,000 Bangladeshis ready to migrate abroad: IOM](#)

Prothom Alo | 16th July
Bangladesh has the fifth highest number of adults who are planning to migrate to other countries seeking opportunities, shows an International Organisation for Migration (IOM) report. It says some 800,000 young Bangladeshis are already preparing to migrate to the countries such as US and the UK. Furthermore, almost 2 million (1.9 million) Bangladeshi adults are planning to migrate, added the report titled 'UN Global Migration Potential 2010-2015'.

[India pursues Act East policy via Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 17th July
Myanmar military chief Min Aung Hlaing wrapped up an eight-day visit to India, with an eye on bilateral defense cooperation. New Delhi has rolled out the red carpet for Min, welcoming his goodwill trip with a charm offensive. It is reported that India will provide a variety of arms equipment, patrol border areas jointly with Myanmar, and dispatch warships to make regular calls at Myanmar's ports. Recently, the strained confrontation between China and India, which led to a prolonged border standoff, has added a tinge of sensitivity to India-Myanmar military interaction.

AFGHANISTAN

[China's role vital for economic development of Afghanistan](#)

Afghanistan Times | 16th July
China has been ready all time for further commercial relations with Afghanistan, and indeed Afghan officials are

making all out efforts to expand relations with friendly and brotherly country of China. It is widely believe that increasing trade relations with friendly country of China could address a number of Afghanistan's demands through cross-border trade. The government of Afghanistan takes trade ties with China as a basic need for Afghanistan's economic growth. Kabul and Beijing are time-tested friends. Aimed at further strengthening ties, the Afghan youth leaders had recently returned home from an official visit from China.

[Afghanistan Signs up to WCO's Arusha Convention](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 17th July

Finance Minister Eklil Hakimi on Sunday pledged commitment to the Arusha Convention of World Customs Organization (WCO) aimed at good governance and customs modernization, a statement from the ministry said. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) statement said the commitment letter to the Arusha Declaration was inked in the presence of Mr. Kunio Mikuriya-Seretary General of the and Mr. Kazunari IGARASHI- Head of WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building. It added the declaration would help developing countries to reach the national goals such as business facilities, reform and the fight against corruption.

BANGLADESH

[People at basis of Bangladesh-India relations: Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Shringla](#)

Prothom Alo | 17th July

Indian high commissioner Harsh Vardhan Shringla said, India pays special attention to strengthening relations with Bangladesh so that the ties bring mutual and sustainable benefits. And it is the people who are the basis of strong ties between the two nations. He was exchanging views with senior journalists of Prothom Alo on Sunday. The meeting took place at the Prothom Alo office.

[Bangladesh Bank eases forex regulations for companies in EPZs](#)

The Financial Express | 16th July

Bangladesh Bank (BB) has relaxed foreign exchange regulations for the companies in Export Processing Zones (EPZs) to bring uniformity in regulations between enterprises of EPZs and Economic Zones (EZs). "Equity from foreign shareholders and authorised loan received in foreign currency from external sources may be credited in Foreign Currency (FC) accounts of 'Type A' and 'Type B' enterprises of EPZs," reports BSS citing said a BB circular on Sunday.

[Bangladesh eyeing FTAs with Brazil, Argentina: Commerce Minister Tofail](#)

bdnews24 | 16th July

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed has said Bangladesh government has plans to sign free trade agreements or FTAs with two major South American countries - Brazil and Argentina. The FTA with Sri Lanka with the aim to boost bilateral trade will also be signed this year, he reaffirmed when asked by reporters at the Secretariat on Sunday. Dhaka has been negotiating the FTA with Colombo since 2013 to increase trade now worth \$80 million every year. This would be Bangladesh's first deal for free trade with any country.

BHUTAN

[Bhutanese Govt. still studying the impacts of GST system](#)

Kuensel Online | 15th July

Even as the GST regime in India has already affected many sectors of the Bhutanese economy, the government is

yet to thoroughly understand the system before making any move. Some industrialists and traders have received notifications from Indian counterparts that prices of goods would increase after the application of GST. The Bhutanese side has requested the government of India to issue a clarification on export of goods from India because GST on Indian exports are not only zero rated, but also the excise duty component, which was imposed in the earlier tax regime, will be done away with. Thus, the prices of goods imported from India should drop.

[Manitar-Raidak-Lhamoizinkha highway remains blocked](#)

Kuensel Online | 15th July

Except for the block at Manitar-Raidak-Lhamoizinkha road, all the highways blocked recently have been cleared, according to the officials from Department of Roads (DoR). A DoR engineer, Neten Tshering, said that there are three blocks at the Manitar-Raidak-Lhamoizinkha area. "Although two blocks at the area have been cleared, clearing the remaining one will take about a week." He said that the machinery has been deployed in the area and work to clear the block had already begun. The road has been blocked since July 9.

MALDIVES

[Majlis holds closed meeting with IMF delegation](#)

Sun Online | 16th July

People's Majlis barred media from the meeting with two of its committees and the delegation from International Monetary Fund (IMF) held this Sunday. The meeting between the delegation from IMF and Economic Affairs Committee and Public Finance Committee was scheduled for 11:30 pm. Neither the two committees nor People's Majlis has yet given a reason for the decision to bar media from the meeting.

MYANMAR

[3 killed in Rakhine explosion: Myanmar police](#)

Mizzima | 17th July

Three people, including two teenage boys, were killed by an explosion in Myanmar's restive Rakhine state on Saturday, a police officer said. Police were investigating if the mine had been laid intentionally or if the victims had accidentally struck unexploded ordnance leftover from a previous conflict, an officer told AFP. "According to our initial information, it was a homemade mine," the officer said, requesting anonymity.

[The construction of BCIM Economic Corridor vs. Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 15th July

The BCIM Economic Corridor is the economic link connecting the Ganges River of India, the Ayerwaddy River of Myanmar, and the Mekong River of Indo-China. It is the lead bridge connecting the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. It is a market focus point for China, South and South East Asia. Therefore, building of the BCIM Economic Corridor conforms to the common interest requirements of the sub regional countries' economic and social development.

NEPAL

[Rs 700m 'stolen' in Rs 1.5b NOC land deal](#)

My Republica | 17th July

Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC), the country's petroleum monopoly, has been found to be indulged in financial irregularities worth multi-million rupees while procuring land plots across the country. In various parts of the country, NOC has paid as high as four times the market price to purchase plots of land to build storage facilities.

The apparent corruption was committed in collaboration with multiple land agents. In doing so, the land agents and NOC's high-level officials have illegally pocketed millions of rupees.

[EC re-urges PM to clear legal, administrative hurdles without further delay](#)

My Republica | 17th July

Worried by the fast-approaching constitutional deadline set for concluding the remaining two sets of elections, the Election Commission (EC) on Sunday re-urged Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to clear the legal hurdles and form the Constituency Delineation Commission (CDC) without further delay.

PAKISTAN

[Panama Papers case: SC takes up JIT report, PML-N files objections](#)

Dawn|17th July

As the Supreme Court (SC) resumed the Panamagate hearing on Monday, lawyers of PML-N and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar submitted documents containing objections to the "damning" final report of the joint investigation team (JIT) that probed allegations of money laundering against the Sharif family. A three-member apex bench, headed by Justice Ejaz Afzal Khan and comprising Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed and Justice Ijazul Hassan, began hearing the case as it returned to the SC after nearly two months. Prior to the hearing, opposition leaders, including Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid, arrived at the apex court and spoke to the media, reiterating their demand for Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's resignation.

[Attack foiled: Four terrorists killed in Zhob](#)

The Express Tribune| 17th July

Four TTP terrorists were killed on Sunday when security forces repelled an attack on check posts near the Pak-Afghan border in the Karez Qamaruddin area of Zhob district.

Security officials said that the terrorists had attacked the Frontier Corps check posts located close to the Pak-Afghan border late Saturday night. They added that the militants had used heavy weapons in the attack. However, the Frontier Corps personnel stationed at the posts returned fire and repulsed the attack. "Heavy exchange of fire took place between security forces and the armed terrorists," the official said, confirming that the four alleged terrorists were killed.

[Army launches Operation Khyber-4 in Rajgal Valley](#)

Dawn|16th July

Director General (DG) Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Maj Gen Asif Ghafoor on Sunday announced the launch of Operation Khyber-4 under Radd-ul-Fasaad (RuF) to "wipe out terrorists" in the Rajgal Valley area of Khyber Agency. "An operation to wipe out terrorists has been launched in Rajgal valley in Khyber Agency," Maj Gen Ghafoor said. Khyber 4 seeks to target terrorist hideouts in what the DG ISPR called "the most critical area in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata)". There is no timeline for the operation as yet, Ghafoor said in response to a question.

SRILANKA

[China-Sri Lanka FTA talks progressing smoothly as bilateral trade grows faster - Minister Bathiudeen](#)

Colombo Page| 16th July

Talks between Sri Lanka and China in pursuit of the coveted Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two countries are progressing smoothly and six exhaustive sessions of official talks have been wrapped to-date Minister of Industry and Commerce of Sri Lanka Rishad Bathiudeen says. "Our talks with China are progressing smoothly, the sixth round of talks were successfully concluded in March in Beijing. We are working for the seventh FTA round next," said the Minister addressing the launch of the China Guangxi Products Expo in Colombo.

[Tamil Nadu Chief Minister hits out at Sri Lanka over arrests](#)

Colombo Gazette| 17th July

The arrest of three state fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy is "disappointing" and shows "high-handedness" by the island nation, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami said, according to the Press Trust of India. In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said Saturday's arrest and the recent legislation enacted by the Sri Lankan Parliament regarding impounding of boats and imposing huge fines on Indian fishermen cause a sense of "fear and unrest" among the fisherfolk. "When the Government of India as well as Government of Tamil Nadu are making all possible efforts to bring an amicable solution to fishing issues in the Palk Bay, the Sri Lankan Government's response is not only disappointing but also a display of high-handedness," Palaniswami said.

[Sri Lanka Health Minister commends media institutions for contributing to dengue eradication](#)

Colombo Page| 17th July

Sri Lanka's Minister of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine Dr. Rajitha Senarathne commended the media institutions for helping in the island wide dengue eradication program launched by the Ministry. "I appreciate all media institutions for setting aside their commercial interests and contributing to the dengue eradication activities today," the Minister said. He said that if the Health Ministry tried to raise public awareness this way it would have cost the Ministry millions of rupees but the media institutions are doing it for free. The Minister expressed these sentiments participating in the dengue eradication program launched in China Fort area of Beruwela in the Kalutara district on Saturday under the patronage of the Minister.

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.

To know more, Please log on to www.anantaaspencentre.in