



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

June 17th, 2016 | Volume: 2 - 35/6

TOP STORIES

[Bilateral ties discussed between Suu Kyi and Indian National Security Adviser](#)

Mizzima | 7th June
Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held talks with Indian National Security Adviser Mr. Ajit Doval at her office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, state media reported. During the talks the State Counsellor and Mr Doval discussed matters on cooperation in the agriculture and construction sectors, border affairs and strengthening bilateral ties.

[Lanka can leverage on human capital, infrastructure – IMF](#)

Daily News | 17th June
Sri Lanka has a strong base of human capital and reliable infrastructure noted the International Monetary Fund (IMF) survey. "This plus factor helps the island to occupy a strategic position in Asia, the fastest growing region in the world, and investments over the last decade (particularly in ports and other transport-related facilities) can take advantage of this opportunity."

[Pakistan discusses nuclear issue with US lawmakers](#)

Dawn | 17th June
As China warned on Thursday that India's entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) would threaten stability in the Asia-Pacific region, Pakistan reached out to US lawmakers to explain its position on the issue. Both China and Pakistan oppose India's entry into the NSG, arguing that admitting a country that has not yet signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty goes against the group's objective.

AFGHANISTAN

[US Said to be Taking 2nd Look at Afghan Troop Reduction Plan](#)

AP/Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 16th June
U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter has told NATO allies that the U.S. will take another look at withdrawing thousands of American troops from Afghanistan by the end of the year, a British official said. British Defense Secretary Michael Fallon said "Carter told us the troop numbers and the dispositions are being looked at again."

[Taliban Ready for Dialogue Based on Shariah: Haqqani](#)

Pajhwok/Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 16th June
The Afghan Taliban are open to peace negotiations if the dialogue takes place in accordance with the Islamic Shariah, the group's second-in-command said on Wednesday. In an audio message, Sirajuddin Haqqani said the Taliban were not averse to talks if they were held in line with the Sharia and if the international community agreed to it, Haqqani, who was elected as Taliban's deputy supreme leader last month, is apparently answering queries from writers and members of the Taliban's media team.

BANGLADESH

[Home minister denies allegation of political harassment](#)

Prothom Alo | 15th June

The home minister, Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, on Wednesday denied the allegation that the law enforcers are rounding up opposition activists during their special 'anti-militant drive' in a bid to harass them for political reasons. "We arrested no one out of ill motive or for harassing anyone politically. More or less 2,000 people used to be arrested a day in the past and so are we doing now," said the home minister while talking to newsmen after a meeting with the US ambassador in Dhaka, Marcia Bernicat, at the Bangladesh Secretariat.

[US attorney in Manhattan probes Bangladesh Bank cyber heist: Source](#)

Bdnews24 | 16th June

The US attorney's office in Manhattan has opened an investigation of the cyber heist of \$81 million from Bangladesh Bank's account at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, a law enforcement source said. Preet Bharara, the US attorney for the Southern District of New York, is investigating the February crime, in which criminals used the SWIFT fund-transfer network to steal money from Bangladesh's central bank.

BHUTAN

[Dzongkhags observe World No Tobacco Day](#)

Kuensel | 16th June

The World Health Organisation (WHO) approach to surveillance of non-communicable disease risk factors survey 2014 shows that 10.8 percent male and 3.1 percent female between the ages of 18 to 69 years are tobacco smokers. The overall prevalence was 7.4 percent. World No Tobacco Day was observed in five dzongkhags of Paro, Phuentsholing, Gelephu, Samdrupjongkhar and Thimphu yesterday to create awareness.

[80 percent of BHU IIs to have female nurses](#)

Kuensel | 16th June

To address the shortage of female health workers in the country, 80 percent of Basic Health Unit (BHU) II will have female nurses by the end of the 11th Plan. This is besides increasing the intake of female candidates at the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences. Health minister Tandin Wangchuk, at the question hour session on June 14, agreed that shortage of female health workers impeded service delivery to women and children, which is a concern.

MALDIVES

[Anti-defamation bill at Parliament replaced by new bill](#)

Sun Online | 16th June

The Anti-defamation bill presented to the Parliament with a large number of obstructions to journalism and freedom of speech has been withdrawn. Parliament Majority Leader, MP Ahmed Nihan Hussian Manik, who presented the bill to Parliament, has confirmed the withdrawal of his bill in a tweet. Nihan said that the bill was his own and he withdrew it when the government submitted a new version of the bill.

[Commonwealth assigns former Kenyan Chief Justice as Special Envoy to Maldives](#)

Sun Online | 17th June

Former Chief Justice of Kenya, Dr. Willy Mutunga has been assigned as the Special Envoy to the Maldives by the Commonwealth. The announcement was made by Mutunga at a special ceremony at the Supreme Court for his retirement. He said that he will be taking up a new job as a Commonwealth Special Envoy to Maldives where he is expected to aid in the process of constitutional and political transition in the country.

MYANMAR

[Meeting between UNFC and Suu Kyi postponed](#)

Phanida/Mizzima | 17th June

A meeting to be held between the government and the Delegation for Peace Negotiation (DPN) of the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) in Chiang Mai, Thailand set to take place in the third week of June has been postponed. 21st century Panglong Peace Convention, pre-convention preparatory subcommittee secretary Hla Maung Shwe said that the government informed the DPN that the government delegation led by Min Zaw Oo wanted to meet in Chiang Mai on June 20.

[KBZ to Step Up Asean Presence](#)

The Irrawaddy|16th June

Burmese conglomerate Kanbawza Bank (KBZ) Ltd, part of the KBZ Group of Companies, has unveiled plans to expand its banking business in the Asean region, after it was granted a license earlier this week to open a representative office in Singapore. This is the second country into which KBZ is expanding, following its first representative office which opened its doors in Thailand in May

NEPAL

[Constitution Implementation: Cabinet approves roadmap to hold 3 elections in 18 months](#)

The Kathmandu Post|17th June

The Cabinet on Thursday approved a roadmap for the implementation of the constitution, aiming to hold three elections—local, state assembly and federal parliament—in the next 18 months. The government has already announced that local body elections will be held by the end of the year. In the proposed roadmap, the government plans to hold the local body elections by December 2016, state assembly elections in April-May 2017 and elections to the federal parliament by December 2

PAKISTAN

[Pakistan to receive more as Afghanistan abandons share in CASA-1,000](#)

The Express Tribune|17th June

Pakistan will receive 1,300 megawatts of cheap and clean electricity from Central Asian states, more than the initially planned 1,000MW, as Afghanistan has abandoned its share of electricity due to dearth of demand. Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and Pakistan have been working on electricity trading arrangements under the Central Asia-South Asia (Casa) 1,000 project that will transmit 1,300MW of power from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Pakistan and Afghanistan.

[Pakistan keen on concluding trade agreements with Tajikistan](#)

The Express Tribune| 17th June

Pakistan wants to conclude bilateral arrangements of transit trade and Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Tajikistan this year in order to generate trade and investment activity with the Central Asian states, said Minister for Commerce Khurram Dastgir on Thursday. During a meeting with the Republic of Tajikistan Minister for Energy Usmonzoda Usmonali Yunusali in Islamabad, Dastgir said, “Pakistan wants to enter into a large trade facilitation framework with the Central Asian states to alleviate the unwanted restrictions which bar trade and investment.”

SRI LANKA

['New and transformative' phase in India - Sri Lanka relations began with new government – envoy](#)

Colombo Page| 16th June

A 'new and transformative phase' in relations between India and Sri Lanka began last year heralding a new beginning after the formation of a new government in Sri Lanka, the Indian envoy said today.

[Special Rapporteur tells UNHRC more reforms necessary in Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Gazette| 16th June

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers Mónica Pinto told the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) that more reforms are expected and necessary in Sri Lanka before the country can be considered to be on a path to sustainable democratization governed by the rule of law.

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