



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

June 19th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 8/6

[Ex-Taliban commander admits the group's leaders are in Pakistan](#)

Khaama Press | 18th June

A former commander of the Taliban group who has joined peace process in eastern Nangarhar province has admitted that the group's leaders are based in the neighboring Pakistan. The provincial government in a statement said a group of Taliban insurgents joined peace process due to the efforts of the Afghan intelligence operatives and have vowed that they will not conduct anti-government activities anymore. The leader of the group Abdul Wahab who has surrendered to the government with his four fighters has said they were conducting insurgency in Khogyani, Shirzad, Hesarak, Chaparhar and some other districts of Nangarhar since last eight years.

[Trade in services crosses \\$8 billion](#)

The Financial Express | 19th June

The country's trade in services with the rest of the world crossed \$8 billion in the first 10 months of the current fiscal year (FY17). Latest statistics of the central bank showed that overall trade in services stood at \$8.79 billion in July-April period of the current fiscal year.

[Pakistan essential for bringing Taliban to talks: US official](#)

Express Tribune | 19th June

Pakistan is an ally on counterterrorism issues and will be essential for bringing the Afghan Taliban to the table for peace talks, says acting Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Tina Kaidanow. "The United States and Pakistan have a close partnership on regional peace, security, prosperity and stability. And we continue to work with the government of Pakistan on areas — many areas of mutual interest, including counterterrorism," adds the US State Department's spokesperson, Heather Nauert.

AFGHANISTAN

[Saudi and Egypt seeks Hamid Karzai's support against Qatar](#)

Khaama Press | 18th June

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Egypt have sought the support of the former Afghan President Hamid Karzai in the stance the coalition of the Arab countries against Qatar. The Office of the former president in a statement said the Ambassador of Egypt and Charge d'Affaires of the Kingdom of Saudi met with Hamid Karzai to discuss the issue surrounding the sanctions imposed on Qatar. The statement further added that the two top diplomats of Saudi Arabia and Egypt demanded from the ex-president to declare his support in the isolation of Qatar.

[Our Nation, Unity under Attack: Ghani](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Pajhwok | 19th June

President Ashraf Ghani on Saturday said the enemy had launched attack on the Afghan nation and their unity after tasting defeat on the battlefield. Addressing a high level huddle of security officials at the Presidential Palace, the president praised the sacrifices, bravery, heroism and patriotism of the Afghan national security and defence forces. "I am proud of you as the commander in chief," the president told the meeting that conferred on security challenges in the country, according to a statement from the Presidential Palace. The acting defence minister and leaders of security organs attended the meeting. The participants briefed the president about security measures across the country and prevention of enemy attacks.

BANGLADESH

[Budget to take country forward](#)

BSS\ The Financial Express | 18th June

The proposed budget for fiscal year 2017-2018 will not only boost the economy but also take the country forward, say members of the Parliament (Jatiya Sangsad). The budget also will play a significant role by maintaining the continuity of development and help transform the country into a developed one by 2041, the lawmakers said while participating in the general discussions on the new budget in the House on Sunday.

[RAB prepares digital database of 2,53,000 criminals](#)

BSS/ Prothom Alo | 19th June

Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) has prepared the largest ever digital database of over 2,53,000 identified criminals, including a large number of militants. The database contains 150 types of information such as photographs, biometric finger prints, irises and previous criminal records and punishments in criminal offences, according to official sources. "The particulars of the criminals, readily available in the database, are helping us a lot to prevent and combat crimes, particularly militant activities," director general of RAB, Benazir Ahmed told BSS.

BHUTAN

[Bailey bridge launched over Jomori in Lauri](#)

Kuensel Online| 17th June

A Bailey bridge, constructed this week over Jomori at Jompa in Lauri gewog, Samdrupjongkhar, will benefit the people of five chiwogs and Lauri primary school. The Bailey bridge was constructed during the five-day training on the launching of Bailey bridge for disaster preparation under eastern region for engineers, armed forces and desuups by the Department of Road (DoR) in Samdrupjongkhar. There were 80 trainees. The training concluded yesterday.

MALDIVES

[Japan donates MVR 70.8 mn in disaster management equipment](#)

Sun Online | 17th June

Japanese government has donated MVR 70.8 million (500 million Japanese Yen) in disaster management equipment to the National Disaster Management Center of Maldives. The equipment was handed over by the

Japanese ambassador to Maldives, Kazumi Endo, in a function held at Kalthukkalaa Koshi last Wednesday, June 14. The donation was accepted by Deputy Minister of Ministry of Defense and National Security, Fathimath Thasneem. The donation – part of the Japanese government's non-project grant aid - includes 70 portable fire pumps, four engine forklifts, eight water trucks, four crane trucks, six life boats, 10 generators and 15 chain saws. The equipment is to be used to improve disaster preparedness and response of Maldivian islands in cases of fires.

MYANMAR

[Myanmar editor facing trial for posting satirical article](#)

Mizzima | 17th June

The editor of one of Myanmar's top newspapers will face trial for defaming the military by posting a satirical article on Facebook, under a controversial law critics say is stifling press freedom. Last month the army sued the editor in chief of The Voice, Kyaw Min Swe, for uploading a link to an article poking fun at the military's leaders for sitting around talking while ordinary soldiers are killed. On Friday a court in Yangon sent him to the city's notorious Insein prison to await the start of his trial next week. Hopes had been high that Myanmar's first freely elected government in generations would usher in a new era of free speech when they took power last year after half a century of military rule.

[Myanmar ship recovers black box from crashed plane](#)

Mizzima | 19th June

A Myanmar ship has retrieved the black box of a plane that crashed into the Andaman Sea with 122 people on board, the army said Sunday, raising hopes of discovering the cause of the tragedy. The military aircraft plunged into the sea during a routine flight from the southern city of Myeik to Yangon on June 7. Most of its passengers were the wives and children of servicemen. Navy vessels and fishing trawlers have so far recovered 92 bodies plus some pieces of plane debris from off the coast of the southern town of Dawei.

NEPAL

[PM's secretariat to be formed after June 28](#)

Himalayan News Service / The Himalayan Times | 19th June

It's been 11 days since Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba assumed the high office on June 7, yet he has not formed his personal secretariat. There is no one to disseminate information about PM Deuba's meeting with leaders and his other news-making events. Currently, PM Deuba has two aides managing his events and meetings. His personal aide Bhanu Deuba manages his meetings and he is assisted by Keshab Raj Joshi. But these two people do their jobs informally as they have not been approved by the cabinet.

[CIAA books eight govt transport officials for revenue embezzlement](#)

Himalayan News Service / The Himalayan Times | 19th June

The Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority today filed cases against eight officials of Transport Management Office, Itahari, on the charge of revenue embezzlement at the Special Court today. CIAA Joint Secretary Jiba Raj Koirala confirmed that cases had been filed against eight office bearers of Itahari Transport Management Office after the CIAA probe showed that they had been involved in huge corruption.

[CC fails to recommend CJ, Oli expresses reservation about Parajuli](#)

My Republica | 19th June

Meeting of the Constitutional Council (CC) on Monday failed to recommend chief justice at the Supreme Court. According to a source, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba proposed the name of the most senior justice Gopal

Parajuli for the position of chief justice but main opposition leader KP Sharma Oli asked for some time to study about Parajuli arguing that he has noticed many controversies against the justice.

PAKISTAN

[President lauds Saudi Arabia's efforts for facilitating pilgrims](#)

Express Tribune | 19th June

President Mamnoon Hussain said on Sunday that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoyed fraternal relations and all Pakistanis had a special place for Saudi Arabia in their hearts. In a meeting with King Salman bin Abdulaziz, the custodian of the two Holy Mosques, at Safa Palace in Makkah, President Mamnoon appreciated Saudi Arabia's generosity towards Muslims visiting Haramain Sharifain and its efforts for providing facilities to Umrah and Hajj pilgrims.

[Government uses GDP as a political tool](#)

Express Tribune | 19th June

Although the gross domestic product (GDP) is a statistical measure, it is used and manipulated by politicians to gain maximum mileage. By showing a high GDP reading, politicians can portray that the economy has significantly improved vis-a-vis the previous political dispensation and the previous year. On this basis, they can impress a large pool of people that the economy is booming. This situation demands a natural question whether the GDP statistics are reliable or not.

[Tackling power crisis may cost govt dearly](#)

Express Tribune | 19th June

The government may be heading towards a series of liquidity damages and swelling capacity payments as it works towards ending power cuts by the end of the year. Official documents seen by Dawn suggest that even though the government has lined up imported Liquefied Natural Gas through independent bidding, it is having difficulties in the off-take of these quantities due to infrastructure bottlenecks. On the other hand, the country's power generation capacity is expected to outperform demand by the end of October for the first time in over a decade. Surplus power generation would continue during the winter months (between October 2017 and March 2018) and would even out in April, May and June 2018, when demand and supply would reach an equilibrium around the 25,000 megawatt-mark.

SRILANKA

[Sri Lanka to issue US\\$ 515 million development bonds](#)

Colombo Page | 19th June

Sri Lanka Central Bank has announced that it plans to sell US\$ 515 million worth of development bonds to foreign and local investors. The Public Debt Department of Central Bank will issue US\$ 515 million in Sri Lanka Development Bonds of 1 year 7 months, 3 years, 4 years, and 4 years and 9 Months tenor to eligible investors for subscription at a rate of either US Dollar 6 month LIBOR plus a margin (floating rate) or at a fixed rate to be determined through competitive bidding.

[Talks still ongoing with India on Trinco oil storage facility](#)

Colombo Gazette | 19th June

Talks are still ongoing with India on the Trincomalee oil storage facility, Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to India Chitrangenee Wagswara said. She told The Statesman there are certain issues which need to be sorted out through discussions. "We know India is interested in Trincomalee region. A business plan is being drawn up by a Singapore-based company also. It is difficult to say by when an agreement would be signed," she said.

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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