



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

July 19th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 8/7

[U.S. airstrikes touches highest level](#)

Afghanistan Times | 18th July
According to the latest military data, the ongoing US-led NATO war on terror in Afghanistan meets increasing level of airstrikes during the first half of 2017 comparing to the similar time of the past three years, the 1TV News reports. The US and NATO air force carried out 1,634 military supplies during the period between January and June which is comparatively the highest level. According to statistics, the US and coalition air force expended 852 munitions in 2014, 298 in 2015 and 545 airstrikes were conducted in 2016.

[India's 'anti-dumping' duty on another item hurts 3 Bangladesh companies](#)

Prothom Alo | 18th July
Neighbouring India has slapped 'anti-dumping' duty yet on another Bangladeshi product, affecting business interests of three Bangladesh exporting companies. The Bangladesh companies are to pay extra amount of duty on hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂), a chemical component that is used in clothing sector, for exporting to the Indian market. The Indian authorities have imposed \$28-\$91 as antidumping duty for exporting a metric tonne of hydrogen peroxide - - measure that the Bangladeshi companies called unjust.

[No ties to North Korea – Myanmar Official](#)

Mizzima | 18th July
Myanmar has no military ties with North Korea, a Myanmar official said on Monday, as a U.S. diplomat responsible for North Korea arrived for talks in which he was likely to seek assurances on efforts to isolate it. Ambassador Joseph Yun met Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and the military's commander in chief in the capital, Naypyitaw, on Monday, RFA reported on 17 July. Yun attended a conference in Singapore over the weekend focusing on tension on the Korean peninsula over the North's unrelenting nuclear and missile programs.

AFGHANISTAN

['Father of Taliban' Sami-ul-Haq offers conditional support to Afghan peace process](#)

Khaama Press | 19th July

The leader of JamiatUlema-e-Islam Sami (JUI-S) Maulana Sami-ul-Haq has offered a conditional support for the peace process in Afghanistan. According to a statement released by Maula Sami's office, the leader of the party has

said he is prepared to support the Afghan peace process but the foreign forces must leave the country first. He has reportedly made the remarks during a meeting with the Afghan ambassador to Pakistan.

[Contracts worth Over 1.4 Billion Afghanis Approved by the Government](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/KP|19th July

The Afghan government has approved nine new contracts worth over 1.9 billion Afghanis during a meeting of the national procurement commission. Chaired by president Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, the meeting was organized in the ARG Palace on Monday afternoon with the main contracts approved includes extension of the consultancy project for the design, preparation of documents, and feasibility study project of Doshi-PulKhumri substation, expansion of Bamyan substation and installation of the new substation, transmission line of 220 kilo volts from Doshi to Bamyan, electricity distribution of 20 kv in Bamyan city, connective lines among the neighboring countries, and technical studies for the prepaid electricity meters.

[Govt Exploring Ways to Revive Textile Industry](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/Tolonews|19th July

According to officials, Afghanistan harvests almost 60,000 tons of cotton a year but there are no factories in the country to process this. Government has called on industry owners to present plans and recommendations for ways to revive the textile industry in the country, a finance ministry spokesman Ajmal Hamid Abdul Rahimzai said on Tuesday. Based on government statistics, Afghanistan harvests more than 59,000 tons of cotton a year but there are no factories in the country.

[Govt. should stop Pak fencing, ditching along Durand Line: Senate](#)

Afghanistan Times|18th July

The Meshrano Jirga or Senate on Tuesday said the Afghan government should prevent fencing and ditching along the Durand Line and shouldn't remain silent. Senator Jumaddin Gianwal told Tuesday's session that Pakistan was currently fencing and digging trenches from Kandahar to Paktia provinces along the Durand Line. He stressed the government should not remain silent on issue. Shir Mohammad Akhundzada from southern Helmand province said the government had claimed stopping the fencing and ditching which continued in different parts of the border.

BANGLADESH

[Awami League Quader dismisses deputy PM post as rumour, hints at possible cabinet reshuffle](#)

bdnews24 | 18th July

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader has brushed off the possibility of a deputy prime minister post being created. But the road transport minister has hinted that the cabinet may go through a reshuffle. Regarding talk in the social media about the position of a deputy prime minister, Quader on Tuesday told reporters: "This is a rumour. This is a baseless, straight lie." He was talking to journalists at the Setu Bhaban in Dhaka's Mohakhali after a meeting with the Australian high commissioner.

[India's MAX hospital offers special package for Bangladeshi liver patients](#)

bdnews24 | 19th July

India's MAX Super Speciality Hospital Saket in New Delhi has launched special treatment packages for Bangladeshis who are suffering from chronic liver diseases, the hospital says. An expert team from this hospital led by Dr Subhash Gupta visited Dhaka and held a liver camp at Chittagong Saturday. BIRDEM Hospital's liver

surgeon Prof Dr Mohammad Ali, who performed the first liver transplantation in Bangladesh, was also present with him.

[‘EU Horizon 2020’ brings opportunities for Bangladeshi researchers, innovators](#)

bdnews24 | 19th July

The Delegation of the European Union in Bangladesh together with the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) has organised a seminar to raise awareness about 80 billion euro research and innovation programme. 'Horizon 2020' is a flagship research and innovation programme of the EU for the period 2014 to 2020. The seminar on Tuesday at the MCCI office was intended to raise awareness amongst Bangladeshi research and business communities about the Horizon 2020, the EU office in Dhaka said.

BHUTAN

[Dilemma over seized properties](#)

Kuensel Online | 18th July

The twenty-three vehicles, including a bulldozer and three motorbikes that the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) seized over the years, have caught the commission in a different fix. The vehicles are collecting dust and rusting at different locations, including the ACC's office basement. This is one of the challenges that the commission faces today apart from backlog of cases. "Delaying of prosecution by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), prolonged adjudication in the court of law, and slow implementation of courts' judgments by the prosecuting agency has delayed clearing of the seized properties," an ACC official said.

[Ministry issues executive order to address wasting and stunting](#)

Kuensel Online | 18th July

The health ministry has instructed health centres in the country to strictly monitor weight and height of all children under the age of five to reduce childhood acute wasting and stunting. The ministry issued an executive order on June 7 requiring all health facilities to immediately and strictly comply with the order. Health secretary Dr Ugen Dophu said reports from the health facilities and monitoring visits indicate that growth monitoring has not picked up as expected.

MALDIVES

[Former Permanent Representative of Maldives to United Nations Sareer appointed Foreign Secretary](#)

Sun Online | 18th June

Former Permanent Representative of Maldives to United Nations, Ahmed Sareer has been appointed as Foreign Secretary. President's Office reported this Tuesday that Sareer is to serve at State Minister level. Sareer left his posts as Maldivian Ambassador to United States and Permanent Representative of Maldives to United Nations this July. Former Foreign Secretary Dr. Ali Naseer has been appointed to fill both the posts. Sareer served as Maldivian Ambassador to United States and Permanent Representative of Maldives to United Nations from December 10, 2012 to this July.

["Elections notified to dismiss members from PPM"](#)

Sun Online | 18th June

The MP for Thulusdhoo constituency, Mohamed Waheed Ibrahim (Lawyer Wadde) and the MP for Vilingili constituency, Saud Hussain and the MP for Maduvvari constituency, Mohamed Ameeth has said that PPM has

sent their names to the Elections Commission to dismiss them from the party. Talking to the press after the visit to the Elections Commission, Lawyer Wadde said that PPM has made the request to dismiss them from the party via email and it has been confirmed by the Secretary General of the Elections Commission.

MYANMAR

[Online defamation law amendments fall short in Myanmar – CPJ](#)

Mizzima | 18th July

A ministerial proposal to amend Myanmar's 2013 Telecommunications Law falls short of the changes needed to guarantee press freedom, the Committee to Protect Journalists said yesterday. The statute has been repeatedly abused to stifle online speech and jail journalists, the CPJ said in a statement on its website. On July 13, the Ministry of Transport and Communications submitted a draft bill to the Upper House of Parliament with recommendations for amending the law, including allowances for accused parties to post bail and a bar on third parties filing cases on behalf of others unless authorized or directly affected by the content in question, according to news reports. Several journalists have been held in pre-trial detention and denied bail under Article 66(d) of the law, which outlines penalties for online defamation, disturbances, and threats.

[In Rakhine State, ruined embankments prevent rice production](#)

Mizzima | 18th July

The residents of the flood-prone part of southwestern Rakhine State are still struggling to resume agricultural production seven years after their lands were devastated by Cyclone Giri in 2010. Giri destroyed the sturdy embankments that helped keep the flow of saline – salt – water from flowing off the bay into the paddy fields, leaving rice farmers with little choice but to try and rebuild the mud and dirt formations themselves. “We cannot grow paddy until now after the flood,” said 56-year-old Ohn Phe, a farmer in Chaungswè village in Kyaukpyu township. In his village, farmers are putting in their own funds to help rebuild, and are going into debt. They have not made much progress. The embankments are still under five feet, not tall enough to keep back serious flooding.

NEPAL

[PM likely to expand Cabinet today: Twenty-two ministers may be added, including 13 from NC.](#)

The Himalayan Times | 19th July

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is most likely to expand his Cabinet tomorrow. A meeting of the Nepali Congress and the CPN-Maoist Centre held this evening at the PM's official residence finalised ministerial berths to be shared by the two parties in the Cabinet led by PM Deuba. NC leader Ramesh Lekhak told THT that his party would take 13 ministries, including the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, the Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation, the Ministry of Irrigation, the Ministry of Information and Communications, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs. The NC already has the ministries of finance, education, and labour and employment.

[Nepalis, saddled with banned Indian rupee notes, risk losing savings](#)

My Republica | 19th July

Nepalis stand to lose millions of dollars held in high-value Indian bank notes that India banned last year and has yet to exchange, a Nepali central bank official said on Tuesday. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November banned 500 rupee (\$7.77) and 1,000 rupee bank notes as part of a drive against unaccounted wealth in

India that has also hit Nepal where Indian rupees are widely used. People holding the notes in India were given a little less than two months to exchange them at banks. In March, officials from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) visited Nepal and promised to allow every Nepali citizen to exchange 4,500 Indian rupees (\$70) worth of the old notes for new ones.

PAKISTAN

[Lawyers top body wants Prime Minister Sharif to step down](#)

Dawn|19th July

Looking to mount pressure on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to step down from office in the light of findings in the Joint Investigation Team's (JIT) report in the Panama Papers case, several of the country's top lawyers' associations, including the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), have announced a countrywide strike from Wednesday.

[Tax collection surges 30pc in 15 days](#)

Dawn|19th July

The revenue collection recorded a growth of over 30 per cent in the first 15 days of 2017-18. The spurt is despite the entanglement of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) in the Panama Papers investigation. In addition, transfers of some of the board's senior officers also took place recently.

[More than 1,000 pilgrims stuck at Pak-Iran border](#)

Express Tribune|19th July

More than a thousand pilgrims from south Punjab have been stranded at the Iranian border for five days due to lack of security to escort them back into Pakistan. People going to Iran and Iraq on religious tours, called Ziarat, are escorted by security forces as the area has often attacks on buses of travelling pilgrims by sectarian outfits. The stranded pilgrims belong to Multan, Khanewal, Layyah, Dera Ghazi Khan and KotAddu.

[Punjab Revenue Minister Ata Manika resigns](#)

Dunya News|18th July

Ata Manika has resigned from his position of Punjab Revenue Minister. He had sent his resignation to Punjab Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif last Friday and awaits formal approval. The provincial cabinet suffered from a major setback as the important Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader expressed dissatisfaction with the ruling party. He said in a tête-à-tête that he was given dysfunctional departments.

[Qatar foreign minister briefs PM Nawaz over Gulf diplomatic crisis](#)

Dunya News|19th July

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif met the Foreign Minister of Qatar, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, who is on an official visit to Pakistan. He briefed the PM over Qatar-Saudi rift and the ongoing diplomatic crisis in the Middle East where several countries have compromised ties with the Gulf state. The two senior officials held a meeting in capital where different issues regarding Pak-Qatar relations as well as the regional security and Saudi-led military alliance came under discussion.

SRILANKA

[Sri Lanka, Singapore to strengthen bilateral relations in trade and investment, finalize FTA this year](#)

Colombo Page| 18th July

Sri Lanka and Singapore plan to strengthen bilateral relations in trade and investment and finalize a new free trade agreement within this year. Singapore Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, who is undertaking an official visit to Sri Lanka from 17-21 July, called on the Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena today at the Presidential Secretariat. Singapore Minister commending the efforts made by President Sirisena to strengthen reconciliation in Sri Lanka said there is immense potential to increase Singaporean investments in Sri Lanka. President Sirisena enlightened the Singapore Minister about the investment opportunities available in tourism and hospitality sectors for investors from Singapore and Dr. Balakrishnan in reply said that Singaporean investors could also look at other sectors like energy, water, education and technology. Already there are over 300 Singaporean investments in Sri Lanka.

[Sri Lankan President calls on government ministries to work together to achieve national development goals](#)

Colombo Page| 18th July

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena called on his government's ministries to work jointly in the process of national development to achieve the development aspirations of the people as well as the country. Addressing a meeting with the Ministry Secretaries at the Presidential Secretariat on Monday, the President emphasized that it is the responsibility of all the secretaries to the ministries to extend their fullest cooperation to achieve success of relevant projects, without giving its duties only to the responsible ministry. The President also highlighted the necessity of maintaining some control over the foreign travels by the Ministers and the Ministry officials from top-to-bottom level, and said that some Ministers and officials when they leave the country to attend conferences, they remain in those countries even after those conferences were concluded. He urged the Ministry secretaries to control this situation as well as to implement a program to train officers, instead of the same officer traveling overseas annually.

[India, Sri Lanka discuss military training, bilateral cooperation](#)

Colombo Gazette| 18th July

Captain Ashok Rao, Defence Advisor to the High Commission of India paid a courtesy call on the Commander of the Army, Lieutenant General Mahesh Senanayake at the Army Headquarters today. The cordial meeting that ensued at the Commander's office focused on matters of bilateral importance and cooperation, mutual training programmes vis-a-vis, capacity-building modules, etc. They also recalled sound and historic relations that exist between both organizations and underlined the need to foster such ties further. Towards the end of the meeting, both Commander of the Army and the visiting Defence Advisor exchanged mementos as symbols of goodwill and understanding. Lieutenant Colonel G.S. Klair, Assistant Defence Adviser of the High Commission of India and Colonel Udaya Kumara, Military Assistant (MA) to the Army Commander also attended the meeting.

About Ananta Aspen Centre

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