

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

July 1st, 2016 | Volume: 2 - 1/6

### TOP STORIES

[Most ISIS militants coming from Pakistan, Central Asian and Gulf States: National Security Adviser Atmar](#)

Khaama Press | 30<sup>th</sup> June  
The majority of the militants fighting for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group in Afghanistan are coming from Pakistan, Central Asian and Gulf countries. The National Security Adviser Mohammad Hanif Atmar informed regarding the issue during a visit to the eastern Nangarhar province on Wednesday. The visit by Atmar followed five days after the loyalists of the terror group launched a major attack on police check posts in Kot district.

[Nawaz allows Afghan refugees to stay in Pakistan for six more months](#)

DAWN | 30<sup>th</sup> June  
Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday granted an extension in the stay of registered Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan for a further period of six months — till December 31, 2016. “Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of States & Frontier Regions shall immediately engage with UNHCR and Government of Afghanistan for gradual relocation of refugee camps in Pakistan to Afghanistan,” spokesperson for the prime minister said. The prime minister issued the directive after seeing the 'Repatriation and Management Policy for Afghan Refugees', said PM Office media.

[World Bank grants Sri Lanka US\\$ 125 million credit to modernize agriculture sector](#)

Colombo Page | 30<sup>th</sup> June  
The World Bank has approved a US\$125 million credit from the International Development Association (IDA) to assist Sri Lanka in modernizing its agriculture sector to become more efficient and attractive as a modern business, more responsive to consumer demand, and more environmentally sustainable and resilient to climate change.

### AFGHANISTAN

[The Controversy over Electoral Reform](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 30<sup>th</sup> June  
Following the 2014 presidential election, Muhammad Ashraf Ghani and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah negotiated a political agreement to form a National Unity Government (NUG). A central part in the negotiations was a commitment to electoral reform. Since then, the process of electoral reform has been slow and unsteady.

[Atmar to Discuss Moscow's Support to Afghan Forces](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 30<sup>th</sup> June

The National Security Adviser Mohammad Hanif Atmar is due to visit Russia in the near future to discuss Moscow's support to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDS) besides holding talks on other issues of bilateral interest. The Office of the National Security Adviser has said Atmar will hold talks with the Russian officials regarding the supply of military equipment to Afghan forces.

### [USAID to Help 900 Afghan Women Pursue Higher Studies](#)

Daily OutlookAfghanistan | 30<sup>th</sup> June

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on Wednesday pledged \$15 million in aid to help 900 Afghan women continue their higher education in Afghanistan's private universities. Michael Raynor, charge de'affairs at the US Embassy in Kabul, told a meeting here that 720 Afghan women would be facilitated to complete bachelor's degrees in Afghanistan.

### [UNHRC Doubles Grant for Voluntarily Returning Afghans](#)

Daily OutlookAfghanistan | 30<sup>th</sup> June

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees FilippoGrandi has announced to double assistance for registered Afghan refugees opting to return to Afghanistan from Pakistan. Concluding his first tri-nation visit to Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, Grandi announced to double the existing individual assistance package for Afghan returnees from an average of \$200 to \$400 per person.

### [Suicide bomb attack kills 30 Afghan police trainees](#)

AfghanistanTimes | 30<sup>th</sup> June

A suicide bomber attacked a bus carrying trainee policemen on Thursday, killing 30, an Afghan official said. The attack took place some 20 kilometers west of the Afghan capital, Kabul, according to MousaRahmati, the district governor of Paghman. He said the trainee police officers were returning from a training center in Wardak province and were heading to the capital on leave. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack in an email sent to The Associated Press by spokesman ZabihullahMujahid.

## **BANGLADESH**

### [Deposits of Bangladeshis Tk 4,423cr](#)

The Daily Star | 1<sup>st</sup> July

Bangladeshi citizens' deposits with Swiss banks rose to 8.85 percent year-on-year in 2015 to an astounding Tk 4,423 crore (550.85 million Swiss franc), shows Swiss central bank data. The deposits went up despite an ongoing global clampdown on the famed secrecy wall of Switzerland's banking system.

### [Bangladesh's position unchanged in US 'Trafficking in Persons' report](#)

Bdnews24 | 1<sup>st</sup> July

The US government has once again kept Bangladesh as the tier-2 country in its annual 'trafficking in persons' report. This is the fifth consecutive year that the US authorities are saying that "Bangladesh does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, but it is making significant efforts to do so". The report released on Thursday is the US government's principal diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments on human trafficking.

### [Myanmar wants matured ties with Bangladesh](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 1<sup>st</sup> July

Myanmar wants to have a matured relationship with Bangladesh so that external disruption does not affect the engagements, Aung Sun Suu Kyi has said. Suu Kyi, Myanmar's state counsellor and foreign minister, said this while meeting Bangladesh Foreign Secretary M Shahidul Haque at her office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

## **BHUTAN**

### [Dorona to receive electricity next week](#)

Kuensel | 30<sup>th</sup> June

After years of anticipation, residents of Dorona Chungwa and Dorona Chewa in Dagana will finally be able to light their homes with electricity.

### [Improving trade relations](#)

Kuensel | 30<sup>th</sup> June

Extension of the closing time at the Samdrupjongkhar border gate and up-gradation of the immigration system were among the

many points raised by the Indian business community at the two-day Bhutan-India workshop in Samdrupjongkhar that ended Monday.

### [Paro taxi drivers against BBIN](#)

Kuensel | 29<sup>th</sup> June

Expressing dissatisfaction over the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) transport agreement that the National Assembly recently passed, taxi drivers in Paro have filed a petition to the National Council (NC) chairperson.

### [Maintaining core competencies to eliminate malaria](#)

Kuensel | 30<sup>th</sup> June

Despite significant progress in controlling malaria over the years with Bhutan about to eliminate it, even a single case of malaria could flare into an epidemic. Therefore, World Health Organisation (WHO) resident representative Dr Ornella Lincetto stressed that strong surveillance, response system and collaboration with relevant sectors in the country must be further improved and sustained.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Maldives Former President Maumoon criticized Yameen's campaign office](#)

Sun Online | 1<sup>st</sup> July

President of PPM and the former President of the Maldives, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom has criticized the campaign office of President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom for the 2018 re-election being led by the First Lady, Fathimath Ibrahim. In an urgent press conference tonight, Maumoon said that PPM members have raised the question if the party is being run by the Party Office or "another Office" and that there are concerns that a number of the duties of the Party's Office is being conducted by "another Office."

### [Former Defense Minister Nazim asks to review his conviction based on forensic report](#)

Sun Online | 30<sup>th</sup> June

Former Defense Minister Colonel (Retired) Mohamed Nazim has requested Supreme Court to review his 11-year prison based on the police forensic report on the pistol found in his apartment. Nazim's attorney Husnu Suood has confirmed this to "Sun". The request comes after Supreme Court made its decision to uphold Nazim's sentence.

## **MYANMAR**

### [US human trafficking report blacklists Myanmar](#)

AFP/Mizzima | 1<sup>st</sup> July

The United States on Thursday blacklisted eight more countries for failing to combat human trafficking, including fledgling democracy Myanmar, but was criticized for taking an easier line on Thailand. Announcing the release of the State Department's annual human trafficking report, Secretary of State John Kerry insisted the rankings were based on objective criteria, and not political favor.

## **NEPAL**

### [Congress calls for holding talks with donors](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 1<sup>st</sup> July

The Nepali Congress, which reached an agreement with the ruling parties on Wednesday on releasing the housing aid in two tranches instead of three, has accused the government of failing to pay attention to the plight of earthquake survivors and not holding formal talks with the donor community for the disbursement of housing grant.

### [Willing to accept Oli as PM if nat'l consensus reached: Dahal](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 30<sup>th</sup> June

CPN (Maoist Centre) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal has stressed on the need of national consensus government for implementing constitution and addressing the grievances of agitating parties. He said that he is willing to accept incumbent Prime Minister KP Oli as the new government head if a consensus government is formed. Speaking at an interaction programme in Nepalgunj on Thursday, Chairman Dahal claimed that there are increasing threats to constitution not being implemented.

### [DDCs asked to investigate activities of NGOs](#)

The Himalayan Times | 30<sup>th</sup> June

The Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development has issued a directive to all 75 district development committees to vigorously investigate activities of NGOs registered with them and initiate legal action against those found guilty.

## PAKISTAN

### [WB to fund \\$200m water project in Balochistan](#)

The Express Tribune | 30<sup>th</sup> June

The World Bank Wednesday approved a \$200 million loan for a water resources management project in Pakistan, raising to \$5.5 billion the amount of net additional loans that the PML-N government has obtained from the Washington-based lender over the last three years.

### [Army not against normalisation of India ties: FO](#)

DAWN | 1<sup>st</sup> July

The Foreign Office rejected on Thursday a perception that the military was obstructing normalisation of ties with India. “No amount of effort can create a wedge between the civil and military leadership of Pakistan. Armed forces of Pakistan fully support the democratic process,” Foreign Office spokesman Nafees Zakaria said at his weekly media briefing. He was responding to comments by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in which he had tried to suggest that the civil-military imbalance in Pakistan was blocking his efforts to have better relations with Islamabad.

### [India ready to hold talks with Pakistan but in pleasant environment, says envoy](#)

DAWN | 30<sup>th</sup> June

Indian High Commissioner Gautam Bambawale on Thursday said that his country is ready to restore dialogue process with Pakistan in a pleasant environment. “We want to restore dialogue process with Pakistan, however, a better environment is necessary in this regard,” Bambawale said while talking to media persons. The Indian high commissioner said that dialogue process should be held in such an atmosphere that it could be continued for a longer period of time. Bambawale said Pakistan and India were about to resume the dialogue process but then the incident of Pathankot happened and it could not be restarted.

## SRI LANKA

### [US keeps Sri Lanka on watch list in human trafficking report](#)

Colombo Gazette | 30<sup>th</sup> June

The United States has kept Sri Lanka on a watch list in the latest human trafficking report released by US Secretary of State John Kerry today. The report states that Sri Lanka is primarily a source and, to a lesser extent, a destination country, for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking.

### [Indian Minister assures a solution to Tamil Nadu fishermen's issue with Sri Lankan Navy](#)

Colombo Page | 30<sup>th</sup> June

India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj on Wednesday has assured the delegation of fishermen associations from Tamil Nadu that the Indian government would try to find a solution to their problems, including harassment at the hands of Sri Lankan Navy.

### [Sri Lanka exports 78 tonnes of fish in a week after EU ban lifted](#)

Colombo Page | 30<sup>th</sup> June

Sri Lanka has exported 78 tonnes of fish to the European Union during the past 7 days following the annulment of the ban on fisheries exports to the European Union (EU), the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development said in a statement.

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### ***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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