



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

**August 21st, 2017| Volume: 3 - 05/8**

[Ghani Stresses Importance of Joining Iran's Railway Network](#)  
Outlook Afghanistan | 21st August  
President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani underlined that his country's Herat province can become a hub for regional transit via Khaf-Herat and China-Haritan railways. "One million tons of cement will be imported to Afghanistan from Iran via Khaf-Herat railroad at the first stage," the Afghan president said while visiting Herat province. He pointed to the railway network from the Eastern region of Khaf in Iran to western Herat province of Afghanistan as well as the China railway to Hairtan port located in North of the landlocked country, and said, "The region will witness economic boom."

[NA-120 campaign restrictions: 'N' to move court against ECP: Saad](#)  
Dawn|21st August  
The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz has announced moving court against the Election Commission's code of conduct that bars any public office-holder from taking part in the electioneering for by-polls in National Assembly constituency NA-120. "The Election Commission has snatched political right of campaign in NA-120 for which the party will go to the court of law for getting the decision overturned," Railways Minister Khawaja Saad Rafiq told the media outside Raiwind residence of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif here on Sunday.

[Bangladesh sends back Rohingya boat carrying injured](#)  
Mizzima| 21st August  
Bangladesh coastguards on 19 August turned back a boat carrying 31 Rohingya Muslim refugees escaping renewed army activity in their neighbouring Myanmar homeland, an official said. The push-back came after at least 500 Rohingya fled their villages in Myanmar's Rakhine state, crossing the border to take shelter in refugee camps and hills in Bangladesh's southeastern Cox's Bazar district. A coastguard patrol boat found the boat on the Naf river, which acts as a border between Bangladesh and Myanmar, as it tried to enter Cox's Bazar early in the morning.

**AFGHANISTAN**

[Afghan Air Force to get organic intelligence reconnaissance capability for the first time](#)

Khaama Press | 20th August

The Afghan Air Force for the time will get organic intelligence reconnaissance capability for the first time as efforts are underway to expand the capabilities of the Afghan forces. The NATO-led Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan in its latest report has said the airpower of the AAF includes the Mi-17 (for air transport of troops and cargo, medical evacuations, and attack), the A-29 (a strike aircraft), the MD-530 (a small attack helicopter), the C-130 (airlift), and the C-208 (airlift with airdrop capability).

#### [UN mission Afghanistan confirms massacre of civilians by Taliban and ISIS loyalists](#)

Khaama Press | 20th August

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) released its latest findings report regarding the massacre of civilians in northern Sar-e-Pul province of Afghanistan, confirming that scores of civilians were brutally massacred during the attack on Mirza Olang area in Sar-e-Pul province of Afghanistan. "The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) released today the initial findings of its human rights fact-finding into the 3 to 5 August attack on Mirza Olang village in Sayyad district of Sari Pul province," the UN mission said in a statement. The statement further added that UNAMA verified allegations that Taliban and local self-proclaimed Islamic State / Daesh fighters killed at least 36 persons, including civilians and person hors de combat, during the attack on Mirza Olang.

#### [Drop Weapons or Face Destruction, Ghani Tells Rebels](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Pajhwok | 21st August

President Ashraf Ghani on Sunday asked the insurgents to either put down their weapons or Afghan commando forces would make them surrender. The president was addressing a gathering, in which the commando forces division was elevated to corps and Gen. Bismillah Waziri was appointed commander of the corps. Addressing the commando forces, the president said: "You are the guardians of the Constitution and the country's honor. You never retreated and always forced the enemy to retreat." "You have brought a dramatic change to the war tactics and now we give two hours to discussing security instead of six hours," the president said.

#### [Trump Has Made Afghanistan Decision after 'Rigorous' Review: Mattis](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Reuters | 21st August

President Donald Trump has made a decision on the United States' strategy for Afghanistan after a "sufficiently rigorous" review process, US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said on Sunday. However, Mattis did not provide details on when the White House would make an announcement or what the decision was on Afghanistan, where fighting still rages more than 15 years after U.S. forces invaded and overthrew a Taliban government. Soon after taking office in January, the Trump administration began a review of U.S. policy on Afghanistan, which has expanded into a broader South Asia review. "I am very comfortable that the strategic process was sufficiently rigorous and did not go in with a pre-set position," Mattis told reporters traveling with him aboard a military aircraft to Jordan.

## **BANGLADESH**

#### [Assassination Attempt on Hasina: Ten Huji men get death by shooting](#)

The Daily Star | 21st August

Ten leaders and activists of Harkatul Jihad al Islami were awarded death penalty on 20 August for attempting to assassinate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina by planting a bomb weighing 76kg in Gopalganj's Kotalipara in July 2000. The convicts will be able to appeal to the High Court within 30 days. Judge Mamtaz Begum of the Speedy

Trial Tribunal-2 in Dhaka handed down the sentence in presence of the convicts in the courtroom.

### [Supreme Court clears way for Gatco graft trial against Khaleda Zia](#)

The Daily Star | 21st August

The Supreme Court today cleared the way for a lower court to run trial proceedings against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in Gatco corruption case. A four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha dismissed two leave-to appeal petitions filed by Khaleda seeking stay on the trial proceeding. Khaleda filed the petition on May 10 last year, also challenging a High Court verdict that rejected her writ petitions against the initiation and continuation of the case. Today, the apex court said the leave to appeal petitions filed by Khaleda Zia are not acceptable as she had filed the petitions with the High Court instead of filing the petitions under the criminal code of procedure.

### [Global operators queue up for contract of maiden specialised terminal project near Chittagong port](#)

The Financial Express | 21st August

Five big global marine and inland terminal operators are queuing up for the contract to build Bangladesh's maiden specialised maritime terminal in Chittagong. A local company is also an aspirant for the terminal project to be implemented on public-private partnership (PPP) model at Laldiar Char, situated adjacent to the Karnaphuli river estuary. The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) owns the Char. The international port operators submitted their request for qualifications (RfQ) in an open bidding that was closed Sunday. The CPA, which lacks specialised terminal to handle bulk cargoes, invited RfQs sometime in June this year.

## **BHUTAN**

### [DNT sues government for violating Constitution](#)

Kuensel Online | 19th August

Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT) yesterday filed a constitutional case with the High Court against the government for alleged violation of the Constitution by granting fiscal incentives without the parliament's endorsement. The party moved the Court two months after it, in a press release, asked the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister to step down on moral grounds. The government granted fiscal incentives worth Nu 1.104 billion since January 1, 2016 to May 7, 2017.

### [Finance ministry clarifies on amendment of laws to grant fiscal incentives](#)

Kuensel Online | 19th August

The finance ministry has clarified that any proposal for tax exemption and fiscal incentives shall be processed as money Bill as per the Constitution. Finance secretary Nim Dorji said that clauses empowering the government to grant exemption and fiscal incentives in the existing laws are proposed for amendment so as to relinquish the government's authority over granting them. He said the amendment is proposed to empower the Parliament on granting fiscal incentives.

### [Medical students in Sri Lanka asked to return home](#)

Kuensel Online | 19th August

The Department of Adult and Higher Education (DAHE) has issued a circular asking Bhutanese medical students in Sri Lanka to return home should the on-going strike continue beyond October this year. Sri Lankan media reports state that the Government Medical Officers' Association and other groups including the Inter University Students Federation have been protesting, questioning the educational and medical standards of the only private

medical university in Sri Lanka, South Asian Institute of Technology and Management (SAITM). The strike, which is also against the privatisation of education, has been on for about six months.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Maldives: Environment Minister Toriq: President's focus for development is unshakable](#)

Sun Online | 20th August

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom's focus is towards the future and the focus is unshakable, says Minister of Environment and Energy, Toriq Ibrahim. Toriq made the comment during the function held at Dharubaaruge last Saturday night to celebrate MWSC's 22-year anniversary. Toriq said the country was undertaking bigger water and sanitation projects that ever before, under President Yameen's leadership. He said that certain individuals were spreading misinformation and creating barriers for the government required to secure necessary funding for development projects.

### [Dhiggaru MP Faris charged with bribery](#)

Sun Online | 20th August

Dhiggaru MP Ahmed Faris Maumoon has been formally charged with bribery. An official from Prosecutor General's Office who spoke to "Sun" said the case was filed with Criminal Court this Sunday. Faris is suspected of bribing fellow parliamentarians to influence the results of the no-confidence vote against Speaker of People's Majlis, Abdulla Maseeh Mohamed. Spokesperson at Maldives Police Service, Ahmed Shifan announced in an earlier press conference that the authority has evidence Faris committed the crime. He has been in detention since his arrest on July 18.

## **MYANMAR**

### [Making the roads of Myanmar safer with active safety technologies](#)

Mizzima | 19th August

Fatalities resulting from road accidents continue to be a daily occurrence in Myanmar. Last year alone, there were more than 16,000 accidents. Over 4,600 people died and left behind their loved ones - tragedies that could have been avoided. If this doesn't strike as a wake-up call for more sustainable measures to address the situation, concrete facts and figures should. While the Myanmar government has conducted numerous safety campaigns and initiatives to improve awareness amongst road users, we need to find sustainable solutions for a problem that is claiming the lives of thousands of citizens and costing governments tremendous amounts of money every year.

## **NEPAL**

### [PM Deuba to visit India from Aug 23](#)

MyRepublica | 21st August

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba will pay a state visit to India from August 23. In a press statement issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) on Monday, it has stated that PM Deuba will visit India at the cordial invitation of his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi. This is the maiden foreign visit of PM Deuba since assuming the office on June 7.

### [Voting on bill to amend charter likely today](#)

The Himalayan Times | 21st August

Parliament Secretariat is preparing to put the constitution amendment bill to vote tomorrow, as clause-wise discussion on the bill began today in the Parliament after all the lawmakers who had moved amendment proposals on the bill finished speaking in the House. Thirty-six of the 37 lawmakers from the ruling and opposition parties who had proposed 50 amendments to the bill spoke in favour of their proposals today.

### [Cabinet expanded with eight Ministers of State](#)

My Republica | 20th August

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has expanded the Cabinet, inducting eight Ministers of State today. With this, the Cabinet has grown to 31 members altogether (three Deputy Prime Ministers, 19 ministers and eight state ministers). The newly appointed State Ministers include Mohammad Jakir Hussein (Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare), Ram Singh Yadav (Ministry of Health), Shyam Kumar Shrestha (Home Ministry), Shambhu Lal Shrestha (Ministry of Energy) and Karna Bahadur BK (Ministry of Supplies).

## PAKISTAN

### [Action against people suspected of money laundering delayed](#)

Dawn | 21st August

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has delayed action for over a year against influential people who were accused by the State Bank's Financial Monitoring Unit (FMU) of laundering money abroad. The number of accused is more than 330 – 80 per cent of them are business tycoons and 20pc influential politicians.

### [Uplift projects fast-tracked in PM's constituency](#)

Dawn | 21st August

After he became prime minister, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's constituency of NA-50 (Rawalpindi-I) has become a priority for the district and divisional administration in the allocation of development schemes. Before this, the district and divisional administration focused more on development works in NA-52, the constituency of former interior minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan.

### [Another day, another no-show by Sharifs](#)

The Express Tribune | 20th August

The Sharif family members on Sunday failed to show up to record their statements with the National Accountability Bureau in a case related to their Avenfield properties. NAB Lahore had issued summonses on Friday to deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif, his sons Hussain Sharif and Hassan Sharif, daughter Maryam Nawaz, and son-in-law Captain (ret'd) Muhammad Safdar directing them to appear before the investigation team to record their statements.

## SRI LANKA

### [Prime Minister pledges to recruit 20,000 unemployed graduates as development assistants](#)

Colombo Page | 21st August

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe says 20,000 unemployed graduates will be recruited to government service as development assistants. Speaking at a function held in Eravur on Sunday, the Premier said the program to recruit the graduates was delayed as a result of country's debt burden.

[Many things to be rejoiced during the last two years of government - Minister](#)

Colombo Page | 20th August

At the next general election, the people's opinion will be sought in a technologically advanced, modernized and civilized country, said the Minister of Lands and Parliamentary Reforms, Gayantha Karunathilaka. Minister Karunathilaka said the public can be content of the environment prevailing in the country at present as the unity government completes two years in office.

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***About Ananta Aspen Centre***

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