

FOCUS:

Neighbourhood



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

July 22th, 2016 | Volume: 2 - 10/7

[Bangladesh, India merge South Asia's biggest land port, ease movement](#)

Bdnews24 | 21st July

Bangladesh and India have merged the busiest land check-post at Benapole-Petrapole, easing the movement of people and goods to take their relations a notch higher. Prime Ministers Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi opened the new 'Petrapole Integrated Check Post' (ICP) through a video call on Thursday. Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee joined them from Kolkata. This is the second ICP on the India-Bangladesh border after the one in Agartala, Tripura, and the biggest anywhere on India's borders.

[Taliban launch series of attacks in Kunduz](#)

Afghanistan Times | 21st July

Taliban insurgents have launched a series of armed attacks in insecure parts of Kunduz province aimed at capturing Qala-e-Zal and Dasht-e-Archi districts, security official confirmed on Thursday. Security forces and the militants suffered heavy casualties in the clashes that erupted this week in Qala-e-Zal and expanded to Dasht-e-Archi on Thursday.

[PML-N set to form govt in AJK](#)

DAWN | 22nd July

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) is set to form the next government in Azad Jammu and Kashmir as unofficial results of general elections for 41 direct seats of the AJK Legislative Assembly on Thursday suggested a landslide victory for the party.

AFGHANISTAN

[Azerbaijan, Afghanistan Mull Creation of Joint Enterprises](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 20th July

Azerbaijan and Afghanistan discussed the creation of joint enterprises to produce food products, said Azerbaijani Economy Ministry in a message. The discussions were held during the meeting of Azerbaijan's Economy Minister Shahin Mustafayev with Afghanistan's Ambassador to Baku Mohammad Taqi Khalili. Economic cooperation between the two countries and other issues of mutual interest were also discussed during the meeting. It was noted that there is great potential for cooperation in transportation, logistics, agriculture, trade and other fields between Afghanistan and Azerbaijan.

[USAID Supported "Made in Afghanistan" Exhibition Launches in India](#)

Pajhwok / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 20th July

As many as 40 Afghan companies would showcase their products at a "Made in Afghanistan" event in New Delhi,

India supported by USAID. The event would raise awareness of Afghan goods and foster business ties between Afghanistan and India, a statement from the USAID said on Tuesday.

[Turkish citizens in Kabul protest against failed coup](#)

Afghanistan Times | 21st July

Scores of Turkish citizens on Thursday came out on the streets here in Afghanistan's capital city and protested against the failed military coup in Istanbul and Ankara. Six days ago, some elements in the Turkey's armed forces plotted a coup to overthrow the democratic government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Turkish civilians overpowered heavily armed soldiers and tanks in the bloody coup that saw over 240 people killed and more than 1,500 wounded.

[Afghan Air Force receive 4 more light attack aircraft from US](#)

Khaama Press | 22nd July

The Afghan Air Force has received 4 more light attack aircraft from coalition partners and were handed over to the 209th Corps of the Afghan National Army in northern Afghanistan. The commander of the Afghan Air Force Abdul Wahab Wardak told reporters in Mazar-e-Sharif city that the planes will be used to suppress the militants in northern and northeastern provinces.

BANGLADESH

[Japan seeks thorough probe into Dhaka attack](#)

UNB / Prothom Alo | 22nd July

Japan has sought a thorough investigation of the facts regarding the killing of its nationals during the Dhaka cafe attack, sharing of related information and strict punishments for the perpetrators. Japan also hoped for full-fledged cooperation to ensure the safety of Japanese people residing in and traveling to Bangladesh and to prevent recurrence, said a Japanese foreign ministry release.

[Dhaka not alone in fight against terror'](#)

The Daily Star | 22nd July

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday said Bangladesh should not consider itself alone in the fight against terrorism and reiterated his country's full support to Dhaka. He and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina were inaugurating through videoconferencing a modern Integrated Check Post at Benapole-Petrapole, the biggest land port in South Asia.

[Bangladesh's share in global clothing market up](#)

The Financial Express | 22nd July

The share of Bangladeshi apparel in the world export market increased to 5.9 per cent last year from 5.1 per cent in 2014. Vietnam is, however, chasing Bangladesh in the global market and looking to a greater share of the pie. The East Asian country's clothing export registered 10 per cent growth last year while Bangladesh registered a moderate 6.0 per cent growth.

BHUTAN

[National Council in BBIN agreement consultations](#)

Kuensel | 21st July

The National Council (NC) is in consultation with various stakeholders about the controversial Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) motor vehicle agreement. The house on Monday held a meeting with officials from the information and communications ministry. The agreement has been assigned to the legislative committee for review.

[Sarpang town evacuated](#)

Kuensel | 21st July

Sarpang town was evacuated yesterday afternoon after the Sarpang river threatened to break its banks following heavy rainfall for almost a week. Sarpang town consists of 52 shops and around 300 people. The level of the river that flows just below the town had risen to dangerous levels and had washed away portions of soil at the edge of the settlement, as of last night.

[Nganglam border gate sealed](#)

Kuensel | 20th July

The Nganglam border gate has remained closed since the evening of July 18 after Indian police asked the Royal Bhutan Police to seal the border. Police officials are advising people not to travel to and from Nganglam until further notice.

[Improving civil servant attitudes and efficiency](#)

Kuensel | 21st July

A need-driven idea, inspired by empathy from understanding the problems and requirements of the customer could produce ideal civil servants in the country. In an effort to inculcate a wholesome approach while dealing with the public and to promote a citizen-centric attitude among the civil servants, a three-day workshop on Design Thinking is being held in Thimphu.

MALDIVES

[President ratifies amendment allowing ministers to approve or reject permanent secretaries](#)

Sun Online | 21st July

President Abdulla Yameen has ratified the amendments to Civil Service Act which allows for government ministers to approve or reject permanent secretary selection for the ministry under their care. The amendments were passed by the parliament last Monday, and ratified by the President this Thursday.

[India's Manipal Hospital signs contract for Cancer Center in Hulhumale' Hospital](#)

Sun Online | 21st July

India's Manipal Hospital signed the contract with Aasandha and National Social Protection Agency to set up a Cancer Center in Hulhumale' Hospital, on Thursday morning. The contract was signed in a ceremony held at Hulhumale' Hospital by CEO and Managing Director of Manipal Hospital - Dr. Ajay Bakshi, Managing Director of Aasandha – Maumoon Abdul Samad, and CEO of NSPA – Mujthaba Jaleel.

MYANMAR

[Aung San Suu Kyi Accepts Obama's Invitation to Visit the US](#)

Reuters / The Irrawaddy | 21st July

Burma government leader Aung San Suu Kyi has accepted an invitation from President Barack Obama to visit the United States, the government said, in what would be her first trip to America since she won an election in November. Suu Kyi planned to travel at a "mutually convenient time," a Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman said. Another government source said the trip was likely to coincide with the UN General Assembly session in New York in September.

[Burma Army Reveals Concerns Over Ethnic Summit](#)

The Irrawaddy | 21st July

The Tatmadaw expressed concern over the upcoming Mai Ja Yang peace summit in Kachin State during a press conference on Wednesday in Rangoon, saying that the meeting could negatively impact the Union Peace Conference, which is slated to convene in late August. Army spokesman and chief of military security affairs Lt-

Gen Mya Tun Oo reiterated the Tatmadaw's—the Burmese term for the national army—intention to cooperate with the civilian-led National League for Democracy (NLD) government, but said the best results for the peace process would stem from open and honest discussion at the Union conference.

NEPAL

[Poudel floats 4-point plan to end stalemate](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 22nd July

Senior Nepali Congress leader Ram Chandra Poudel on Thursday floated a four-point proposal, aiming a "package deal" among major parties to end the current impasse. With the governing CPN-UML and the Nepali Congress-Maoist Centre alliance refusing to budge from their stances, Thursday's Parliament meeting was postponed until Friday.

[Establishment of SAARC industrial park gathers momentum](#)

Himalayan News Service / The Himalayan Times | 22nd July

The initiative taken by the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) to establish a SAARC industrial park in each member nation has been gaining momentum as some of the member states have designated areas for the proposed SAARC industrial park.

['Policy is forward-looking and we have welcomed it' - Interview](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 22nd July

Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) recently unveiled the monetary policy for the fiscal year 2016-17. Prithvi Man Shrestha and Bibek Subedi caught up with Upendra Poudel, CEO of NMB Bank and president of the Nepal Bankers' Association (NBA), to discuss the policy and find out how bankers saw it.

PAKISTAN

[Pakistan, India in bitter war of words](#)

The Express Tribune|22nd July

Pakistan and India engaged in a bitter diplomatic spat on Thursday after the nuclear-armed neighbours accused each other of escalating violence in the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir. Speaking at a news conference at the Foreign Office, Prime Minister's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz directed scathing criticism at India for carrying out 'state-sponsored terrorism' to suppress the legitimate Kashmir freedom struggle.

[FY 2015-16: Current account deficit shrinks 6.8%](#)

The Express Tribune|22nd July

Despite a windfall arising out of lower oil import bill, Pakistan's current account deficit registered a small reduction in 2015-16 to stand at \$2.5 billion, according to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Thursday. The current account deficit shrank 6.8%, or \$184 million, year-on-year in 2015-16. It had amounted to over \$2.7 billion in the preceding fiscal year, SBP data shows.

[Parliament's joint session on held Kashmir soon: Aziz](#)

DAWN|22nd July

Foreign Affairs Adviser Sartaj Aziz agreed to a proposal floated in the Senate on Thursday for a national policy on India-held Kashmir and said an action plan should also be worked out for making headway towards resolution of the long-standing dispute. He said the federal cabinet had recently decided to convene a joint session of parliament on Kashmir and its date would be announced in a few days. He endorsed the four-point formula presented by Kashmiri leader Syed Ali Gilani.

SRI LANKA

[Government will look to expand trade ties with China](#)

Colombo Gazette| 21st July

The Government will look to expand trade ties with China in future, the President's office said today. The President's office quoted Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera as saying that while Sri Lanka is working on trade agreements with India and Pakistan, it will expand it with China as well in the future.

[Sri Lanka nationwide inflation rises to 6.4 percent in June 2016](#)

Colombo Page| 21st July

Sri Lanka's nationwide inflation in June 2016 determined under the new National Consumer Price Index (NCPI) rose to 6.4 percent from 5.3 percent recorded in May 2016, on an year-on-year basis, the Department of Census and Statistics reported on Thursday.

[IFC, Sampath Bank Boost Trade Finance for Small Businesses in Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page| 22nd July

IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, is partnering with Sampath Bank PLC to provide trade financing for Sri Lankan exporters to help them access global markets and boost the country's trade.

[Pakistan confirms talks underway with Sri Lanka for four A330s](#)

Colombo Gazette| 22nd July

Pakistan's national air carrier, PIA, confirmed it is in talks with Sri Lanka to take four wide-bodied planes on rent which it will use for its premium flights to London that PIA intends to start from August 14, officials told The Express Tribune. In addition to the planes, PIA will also get the services of its accompanying crew.

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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