



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

July 24th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 10/7

[India eyes new waterway with Bangladesh soon](#)

The Financial Express | 23rd July
New Delhi expects a new waterway between Bangladesh and India will complete in one year. The Indian and Bangladeshi governments have undertaken an ambitious project to establish a new waterway between the two neighbours using the mighty Brahmaputra river, India Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said recently. India stressed multi-modal connectivity in the northeastern region, including water connectivity.

[FNCCI to hold Nepal-India investment summit in October](#)

My Republica | 24th July
In an effort to attract Indian investment in Nepal, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) is planning to hold Nepal-India investment summit in October this year. Publishing the achievements of the first 100 days of the newly elected FNCCI executive committee on Sunday, FNCCI president Bhawani Rana said the summit will be held towards mid-October. Speaking at a press meet held in Kathmandu, president Rana said the newly elected executive committee has started its tenure with four major agenda: administrative reform and institutional development of FNCCI; policy lobbying and intervention; economic diplomacy and international trade; and capacity building of private sector & FNCCI members through innovative programs.

[Sri Lanka is collaborating with other countries to make island the economic hub of Indian Ocean](#)

Colombo Page | 24th July
Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe says Sri Lanka is collaborating with other countries to make island the economic hub of Indian Ocean. Marking 40 years of his political life in Parliament, the Premier in a Facebook post said the government has taken steps to have close links with India while strengthening ties with China and Japan for the betterment of the island. He said the people wanted an economic and a political revolution and the two major parties felt the need to have a national government to make the changes people wanted.

[Dozens killed, wounded in an explosion in Kabul city](#)

Khaama Press|24th July

Dozens of people were killed or wounded in an explosion in Kabul city on Monday. The incident took place around 7 am local time in the vicinity of the 3rd police district of the city in West of Kabul. The security officials are saying at least twenty four people were killed and several others were wounded in the explosion.

[USAID Celebrates Five Years of Success Promoting Afghan Entrepreneurship through the ABADE Program](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/PR|24th July

In October of 2012, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Afghanistan launched an economic growth program to work with the private sector to strengthen productivity and help enterprises sustain growth and create jobs. Over the past five years, the program accomplished those goals. In an official ceremony at the United States Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, USAID celebrated the significant contributions of entrepreneurs and beneficiaries of the Assistance in Building Afghanistan by Developing Enterprises (ABADE) program to the stability and economic prosperity of Afghanistan and the critical role they play in generating employment opportunities across the country.

[CEO Calls for Urgent Unity to Avoid Political Crisis](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/Tolonews|24th July

Speaking at Youth Parliament in Kabul, Abdullah warned that any attempt to promote terrorism or extremism was an act of treason. Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah on Sunday called on all Afghan political leaders and political parties to act responsibly, to put aside their personal issues and to work for the benefit of the country. According to the CEO, any attempt to promote terrorism or extremism is an act of national treason.

BANGLADESH

[Farm-sector NPLs swell by Tk 11.16b in FY '17](#)

The Financial Express | 24th July

The volume of classified loans in the agricultural sector bloated by over 27 per cent or Tk 11.16 billion in the just-concluded fiscal year, dodging a close watch by the central bank. According to Bangladesh Bank (BB)'s latest statistics, the non-performing loans (NPLs) lying with farmers rose to Tk 52.41 billion in the FY 2016-17 from Tk 41.24 billion a year before. "The volume of NPLs increased mainly due to higher growth in outstanding loans in the agriculture sector," a BB senior official told the FE Sunday.

[BD receives 3rd highest AfT commitment](#)

The Financial Express | 23rd July

Bangladesh received the third highest amount of Aid for Trade (AfT) commitment in 2015. The amount was \$2,424.30 million while the actual disbursement stood at \$910.10 million. The report titled 'Aid for Trade at a Glance 2017: Promoting Trade, Inclusiveness and Connectivity for Sustainable Development' revealed the information.

[Bangladesh supplies 11 per cent of Europe's bicycles](#)

The Financial Express | 23rd July

Bangladeshi manufacturers supplied 11 per cent of the European Union's (EU) total imported bicycles in the past year or 2016. Data available with Euro Stat also showed that 42 per cent of the bicycles imported by EU member countries came from outside the EU. The main sources are: Taiwan (24 per cent), Cambodia (18 pc), Bangladesh (11pc), and the Philippines (10 pc).

BHUTAN

[Women entrepreneurs call for a platform to formalise policies](#)

Kuensel Online | 22nd July

Bhutan is the only country in the region that does not have a chamber where issues concerning women entrepreneurs could be raised and addressed, a recent consultative meeting revealed. The two-day meeting on effective policies of women entrepreneurship in SAARC region, organised by the Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs (BAOWE) and South Asian Women Development Forum (SAWDF) with women entrepreneurs, associations, experts and stakeholders, also revealed that Bhutanese women entrepreneurs lack a formal platform and policies for development. Representatives from Bhutan said that unlike other countries in the region, Bhutan does not have special incentives or tax exemptions for women entrepreneurs. They said the country also lacks access to regional and international markets. Participants recommended the need for women representation in SAARC, bank that caters to women with branches in all the member states, cross border trade, a regional trade facilitation centre for data and information on each country, policies specific to women entrepreneurs and a monitoring body for the implemented policies.

[E.Coli bacteria found in Thimphu and Paro rivers](#)

Kuensel Online | 22nd July

Water samples collected at various locations from the rivers in Thimphu and Paro were found to contain bacteria E.Coli. E.Coli is commonly found in the faeces of humans and other animals, indicating a possible presence of harmful, disease-causing organisms. The samples were collected over the past four days from Dechen Zam, the Centenary Farmers' Market area, the centenary park, Dodena and Dechenchholing in Thimphu, and from Utpal, Nyme Zampa, Paro Water Supply, and tap water at Sonam Trophel in Paro. The samples were collected as part of the Wangchhu Waterkeeper water quality-monitoring programme that was launched on July 19 by Clean Bhutan and the Waterkeeper Alliance. The programme aims to provide reliable and accurate reporting of current and future water quality information of local rivers.

MALDIVES

[Minister of Home Affairs Azleen: Do not answer call of those who seek to instigate violence](#)

Sun Online | 23rd July

Minister of Home Affairs, Azleen Ahmed has appealed to the general public not to answer the call of individuals who conspire to harm Maldivian people, the police and their families. Minister Azleen made the appeal during the function held at Iskandhar Koshi this Sunday morning to mark Police Memorial Day. He warned the people of

Maldives of conspiracies by foreigners and a group of Maldivians to tarnish the peace and sovereignty of the country.

MYANMAR

[Suspected terrorists arrested in Maungtau](#)

Mizzima | 24th July

A total of 31 suspects have been arrested by Myanmar security forces in Maungtau township, northern Rakhine state over the weekend for holding a secret meeting in Kyauk Hlaykha village to commit terrorist acts, Xinhua reported on 24 July quoting the Myanmar News Agency. Acting on information, the security forces rounded up the secret meeting venue. The suspects are under legal examination to ascertain if they are connected with any terrorist organization, according to the report.

[Myanmar still using 'same tactics' of oppression as junta: UN envoy](#)

Mizzima | 22nd July

Myanmar is still using the same "tactics" to silence its people as the former junta, the UN's rights envoy said Friday, urging the government to allow the UN to probe allegations of ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims. More than 70,000 Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh since October to escape a bloody crackdown by security forces, many bringing stories of mass killings, gang rapes and arson by security forces. UN investigators fear the military has used "clearance operations" launched to find militants who attacked police as a cover for possible ethnic cleansing of the oppressed minority. The government has staunchly denied the allegations but refused to allow in a UN fact-finding mission to investigate, or allow unfettered access for international journalists or rights workers.

[Canadian engagement - Interview with Canadian Ambassador to Myanmar Karen MacArthur](#)

Mizzima | 22nd July

Canada has a growing relationship with Myanmar and recently hosted a visit of Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi to Ottawa. From the latest statistics, Canada currently has US\$202 million invested in Myanmar. Bilateral trade as of 2016 stood at US\$92 million, according to Canadian government statistics. In the following interview carried out this week by Mizzima Senior Business Correspondent Aung Thura, Ambassador Karen MacArthur discusses Canada's engagement with Myanmar and a recent seminar on the development of Yangon.

NEPAL

[Deuba expedites talks for Cabinet expansion](#)

The Kathmandu post | 24th July

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has expedited consultations with leaders from various parties including his own, Nepali Congress, in a bid to expand the Cabinet. Six weeks after taking office, Deuba is under pressure to expand the Cabinet. He discussed the agenda with CPN (Maoist Centre) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Rastriya Prajatantra Party chief Kamal Thapa and senior NC leader Ram Chandra Poudel on Sunday. Dahal said that he pressed the PM to appoint ministers without further delay.

PAKISTAN

[Banners favouring Shahbaz as PM appear in Lahore](#)

24th July 2017 | Dawn

Banners in favour of Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif appeared in the city on Sunday, asking Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to step down and let his younger brother become the premier. The banners were put up outside the Lahore Press Club at Shimla Pahari by 'NGO Pakistan'.

[Rupee report: Rupee's downtrend continues](#)

24th July 2017 | Dawn

THE rupee showed a weakening trend in the local currency market last week, but traded in a narrow range. As a result, the dollar closed firm in both interbank and open currency markets while the leading currency dealers remained on the sidelines ahead of Supreme Court's judgment in the Panama Papers case.

[Khurshid foresees Panama Papers case verdict announced by 26th](#)

24th July 2017 | Dawn

Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah has said that Supreme Court may announce its reserved verdict on the Panama Papers case before Wednesday and reiterated his 'advice' that the prime minister should tender resignation.

He advised Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf not to hurry in expressing jubilation before the verdict and said Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan was disturbed at the sight of so many young and ambitious politicians around the prime minister.

[Journalists chant 'shame shame' ahead of Daniyal Aziz, CADD minister media talk](#)

23rd July 2017 | Dunya News

Journalists have lodged protest with leaders of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Sunday after media personnel were assaulted by officials of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for clicking pictures of arrested chief of Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP).

[Train drivers end strike after 18 hours](#)

23rd July 2017 | Geo News

The Train Drivers' Association ended its strike on Sunday after they were assured by the authorities of increase in salaries and perks, and release of arrested fellows. The strike, which lasted for 18 hours, affected schedule of trains across the country late Saturday.

SRILANKA

[Travel goods from Sri Lanka to enjoy duty free entry to the United States](#)

Colombo Page | 24th July

Export of travel goods from Sri Lanka will enjoy duty free entry to the United States following a decision by the United States administration to approve the inclusion of travel goods from all GSP beneficiary countries, including Sri Lanka, in the expanded US General System of Preferences (GSP) scheme on July 1, 2017. This would enable the duty-free entry of products such as bags, wallets and backpacks in to the US market after being previously charged 6 to 20 percent of tariff, Foreign Affairs Ministry said in a statement. Following this concession, Sri Lanka's travel goods exports to the United States will have the potential to regain the market share previously

enjoyed by Sri Lanka by making the country among top 10 suppliers to the US market, once again. The inclusion of travel goods in the GSP is expected to help US travel goods brands and retailers to broaden sourcing options for these products.

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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