



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

June 24th, 2016 | Volume: 2 - 16/6

**TOP STORIES**

[US awards \\$1.7 billion contract to procure radios for Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press| 23<sup>rd</sup> June

The United States has awarded a contract worth \$1,700,000,000 for the procurement of radios for Afghanistan. The contract has been recently awarded to the New York-based Harris Corp., the United States Department of Defense (DoD) announced Wednesday.

[\\$2b North-South pipeline: Law ministry allows contract for sanction-hit Russian firm](#)

The Express Tribune|24<sup>th</sup> June

The Ministry of Law, Pakistan, has given the go-ahead for the award of \$2 billion liquefied natural gas (LNG) pipeline contract to the energy firm designated by Russia, though the US has slapped sanctions on the company, officials say. The approval comes after the Russian government signed a deal with Pakistan last year for laying a pipeline from Karachi to Lahore, called the North-South pipeline, to transport imported LNG. It nominated RT Global Resources for executing the project.

[India HC dismisses plea to ensure fishing rights in Sri Lanka's Katchatheevu waters, leaves it for governments](#)

Colombo Page | 24<sup>th</sup> June

The Madras High Court in Indian state of Tamil Nadu has on Thursday dismissed a plea seeking a direction to the Union government to enforce the 1974 agreement between India and Sri Lanka in letter and spirit to ensure fishing rights of Indian fishermen in the international waters.

**AFGHANISTAN**

[5.4-magnitude earthquake reported in Afghanistan with epicenter in Badakhshan](#)

Khaama Press| 23<sup>rd</sup> June

A relatively powerful earthquake jolted capital Kabul and the surrounding areas of the city on Thursday. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) reported a magnitude 5.4 earthquake in Northwest of Badakhshan province of Afghanistan.

[Restricting Muslims' Rights?](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan| 23<sup>rd</sup> June

U.S. Republican Politician Donald Trump has capitalized on Orlando's episode and talks with more serious tone against Muslims. In response to the mass shooting, carried out by an American murderer Omar Mateen, who happened to be Muslim, Trump said that the attack was the work of a "radical Islamic terrorist" – and attacked both Obama and presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton for refusing to say the words "radical Islam" in their responses.

[Afghan Election Delay will Harm International Trust, Warns Akifi](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan| 23<sup>rd</sup> June

Any further delay in holding country's parliamentary and district council elections will undermine the trust of Afghanistan's international partners, Shah Sultan Akifi, the head of Electoral Reform Commission (ERC) has warned.

### [Wolesi Jirga Passes New Draft Law on Presidential Decrees](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 23<sup>rd</sup> June

The Wolesi Jirga or lower house of parliament on Wednesday passed an eight-article draft law barring the president from issuing legislative decrees on issues already covered in existing laws. The national assembly also declared it could not include the presidential legislative decree on electoral reforms in its last year's agenda.

## BANGLADESH

### [PM seeks people's help to fight militancy](#)

The Daily Star | 23<sup>rd</sup> June

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today sought people's cooperation to fight against militancy and terrorism for maintaining peaceful atmosphere in the country. Speaking at the parliament, she said: "We are taking actions against terrorism and militancy so that peaceful atmosphere prevails in the country. We seek cooperation of the countrymen to this end." Industries Minister and senior Awami League leader Amir Hossain Amu initiated the unscheduled discussion marking the 67th founding anniversary of Bangladesh Awami League.

### [PM Hasina urges Awami League to build the party in light of Bangabandhu's ideal](#)

Bdnews | 24<sup>th</sup> June

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged Awami League leaders and activists to shape their lives and the party in the light of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's ideal. The Awami League chief gave the call at a discussion in Dhaka marking the party's 67th founding anniversary on Thursday. "You, all the leaders and activists, must build your lives along with the organisation with honesty in the light of the Bangabandhu's ideal," she said.

### [Bangladesh has become a 'police state'. BNP chief Khaleda says](#)

bdnews24 | 24<sup>th</sup> June

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has alleged that people from all religions are 'being oppressed' as, in her words, Bangladesh has become a police state under the rule of the current Awami League government. "This state is not a democratic state now. It has become a police state," she said at an Iftar party on Wednesday. "Everything is being run under the police. They (police) are picking up and killing in crossfire whoever they want to," she added.

### [BB to show \\$81m heist fund in balance-sheet as other assets](#)

The Financial Express | 24<sup>th</sup> June

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) is going to follow recommendations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) regarding its stolen fund, and will show the fund in other assets as protested bill in its balance-sheet. The central bank will also examine another recommendation of IMF for keeping provision against the stolen fund, if necessary, in accordance with the existing rules, regulations and accounting norms. The decisions were taken at a meeting of the central bank board of directors, held at its headquarters on Thursday with BB Governor Fazle Kabir in the chair.

## BHUTAN

### [Study finds mining sector suffers from weak governance](#)

Kuensel | 23<sup>rd</sup> June

Investing in the geology and mines department and providing stronger legislative support will result in better returns for the country, a multi-agency study has revealed.

### [Assembly turns down Council's tax bill recommendation](#)

Kuensel | 23<sup>rd</sup> June

The National Council's recommendations for the tax reform bill failed to muster adequate support in the National Assembly yesterday. The budget will be submitted for Royal Assent.

### [Health minister quizzed on sustainability of herbal plant species](#)

Kuensel | 23<sup>rd</sup> June

Given the increasing rate of extraction and collection of herbal plant species annually for manufacturing traditional medicine in the country, the health minister was asked how the government would ensure its sustainability at the National Council's question hour session yesterday.

### [Three incumbent gups yet to decide on re-contesting](#)

Kuensel | 23<sup>rd</sup> June

Of the five gups in Trongsa, only two have decided to re-contest in the second Local Government (LG) elections this year. Nubi Gup Tashi Pendhen and Langthel Gup Sonam Dhendup will be contesting again, while Drakteng Gup Gayley Chophel is still undecided.

## MALDIVES

### [Governor: Not thinking of fleeing, didn't take part in embezzlement](#)

Sun Online | 23<sup>rd</sup> June

Governor of the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA), Azima Adam has said that despite the accusations of the oppositions, she has no intention leaving the country. The opposition coalition has made an accusation that Foreign Secretary, Dr. Ali Naseer is making arrangement for his wife, the MMA Governor to leave the country. In response, Governor, Azima told Sun Media today that she has no thinking or plan to move abroad.

## MYANMAR

### [EU unveils new strategy for Myanmar](#)

Mizzima|23<sup>rd</sup> June

The EU's New Strategy on Myanmar include 6 Key Areas - (1) Democracy, Rule of Law, and Good Governance (2) Peace Process (3) Protection and promotion of Human Rights (4) Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development (5) Economic Engagement and Trade and (6) Myanmar in the Region. New proposals to Myanmar include (1) military-military Cooperation except Arms Sales which remain on the EU's sanctions list and budgetary support to the Myanmar government

### [EU Says Burma Needs "Space" to Deal with Rights Abuses](#)

Thomson Reuters Foundation/ The Irrawaddy|23<sup>rd</sup> June

The European Union said on Wednesday that Burma needed "space" to deal with human rights abuses in its restive northwest, adding it would respect the call by country leader Aung San Suu Kyi to avoid the term "Rohingya" to describe persecuted Muslims there. The statement exposes a rift in the West's approach to the sensitive issue, standing in contrast with the United States, which said it would continue to use the term, citing respect for the right of communities to choose what they should be called.

### [Thousands of Burmese Migrants Unable to Meet With Suu Kyi](#)

The Irrawaddy|23<sup>rd</sup> June

Despite around ten thousand Burmese migrant workers in Thailand waiting hours—under both the hot sun and, later, rain—for the opportunity to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi, less than five hundred were ultimately permitted to do so. This caused widespread frustration at the Talay Thai Seafood Market in Mahachai, and led to the deployment of almost 1,000 security personnel by Thai authorities to quell any agitation, although the crowd remained peaceful.

## NEPAL

### [Nepal to seek compensation from Canadian government](#)

Himalayan News Service / The Himalayan Times | 24<sup>th</sup> June

Nepal has decided to seek compensation from the Canadian government for the families of 13 Nepalis who used to guard the Canadian Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, and were killed in a suicide attack on June 20.

### [Grant agreement signing resumes for reconstruction of damaged houses](#)

Himalayan News Service / The Himalayan Times | 24<sup>th</sup> June

The signing of agreement to receive the government-allocated grant amount meant for the reconstruction of houses that were damaged in last year's devastating earthquake has resumed in Kavre.

### [Govt imposes ban on Afghanistan as work destination](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 23<sup>rd</sup> June

The government has decided to prohibit Nepalis from going to Afghanistan to work as migrant workers in the wake of Kabul carnage in which 13 Nepali workers were killed. A Cabinet meeting on Thursday decided to impose a ban on Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya as work destination deeming the countries as an unsafe, Minister for Information and Communications Sher Dhan Rai said.

### [Cross-border oil pipeline: Indian Oil Corporation asks govt to waive taxes on equipment](#)

The Kathmadnu Post | 24<sup>th</sup> June

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has asked the Nepal government to waive taxes on equipment and logistics required for the construction of cross-border petroleum pipeline. India is constructing the 41-km Raxaul-Amlekhgunj oil pipeline for Nepal in grant.

## PAKISTAN

### [ICJ urges govt to roll back system of 'military justice'](#)

DAWN|24<sup>th</sup> June

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) on Thursday urged the Pakistan government to discontinue the trial of civilians through military courts. In a statement, it asked the government to "stop putting civilians charged with terrorism-related offences on trial before military tribunals". Since January 2015, when Pakistan empowered military courts to try civilians for terrorism-related offences, 11 military courts have been set up to hear such cases. These courts have thus far concluded the trial of 105 people, finding the defendants guilty in 81 cases. Seventy-seven people have been sentenced to death and four given life sentences. At least, 12 people have been hanged after the trials. The ICJ, however, described it as grossly unfair.

### [Pakistan to continue regulating Afghan border, says FO](#)

DAWN|24<sup>th</sup> June

The Foreign Office said on Thursday that Pakistan would go ahead with its plans for regulating the border with Afghanistan as part of its counterterrorism strategy and urged the Afghan government to cooperate. "We are determined to put in place effective border control on the border crossings. The cooperation of the Afghan government can play an important role in achieving our shared objective of promoting lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region," FO spokesman Nafees Zakaria said at his weekly media briefing.

### [Indian envoy calls for enhancing bilateral trade](#)

The Express Tribune|24<sup>th</sup> June

Indian High Commissioner in Pakistan Gautam Bambawale on Thursday said that the list of commodities that can be traded between the two countries through the Wagah border should be enhanced and the cost of doing business for entrepreneurs should be reduced. Bambawale attended a meeting with business leaders at the Federation of Pakistan Chambers Of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) secretariat alongside its president Abdul Rauf Alam, and Trade Development Authority of Pakistan CEO S M Muneer.

[Positive outlook: MOL announces second gas find in one week](#)

The Express Tribune | 24<sup>th</sup> June

Fresh from the discovery of gas last week, MOL Pakistan has announced another find in the same Tal block in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, according to a bourse filing on Thursday. Pakistan Oilfields Limited (POL), also a stakeholder in the block, reported to the Pakistan Stock Exchange that they had found gas reserves in a newly tested well, Tolanj West-01, in the block.

**SRI LANKA**

[China claims it has Sri Lanka's support on South China Sea issue](#)

Colombo Gazette | 24<sup>th</sup> June

The Chinese Government claims it has the support of Sri Lanka in the South China Sea issue. China's Foreign Ministry brushed off doubts about how many countries have offered support for its position in a case brought by the Philippines over Chinese claims in the South China Sea, saying the number of nations was growing daily.

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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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