



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

June 27th, 2016 | Volume: 2 - 17/6

TOP STORIES

[Afghanistan Still World's Largest Opium Producer by Far: Report](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 27th June

Afghanistan is by a long way still the world's largest opium producer, accounting for some 70 percent (3,300 tons) of global opium production, according to the United Nations World Drug Report of 2016. Myanmar is the second largest producer of the drug at 14 per cent (650 tons) of global production. According to the UN report, the total value of the illicit opiate economy in Afghanistan was \$2.8 billion USD in 2014 — equivalent to 13 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

[Maiden joint meeting of Nepal-India EPG next week](#)

The Himalayan Times | 26th June

The first joint meeting of the Eminent Persons Group on Nepal-India Relations (EPG-NIR) would be held in Kathmandu on coming July 4 and 5. The EPG-NIR was established to look into the totality of Nepal-India relations from independent, non-governmental perspectives and suggest measures to further expand and consolidate the close and multifaceted relations between the two countries.

[Pakistan looks for US lobbyist amid diplomatic challenges](#)

Dawn | 27th June

Two recent diplomatic disasters — the US refusal to subsidise an F-16 deal and the Obama administration's campaign to induct India into the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) — have forced Pakistan to look for a paid lobbyist in the US capital. Pakistan Embassy spokesman Nadeem Hotiana confirmed to Dawn that the country was now looking for a lobbyist "but has not yet taken any decision". US Justice Department record shows that the last law firm to lobby for Pakistan in Washington was Locke Lord Strategies. Pakistan failed to renew its contract with the firm in July 2013, about a month after the PML-N replaced PPP in the government in Islamabad.

AFGHANISTAN

[SCO – A Hope for Afghanistan](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 25th June

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Tashkent gives Afghanistan some confidence in its fight against terrorism, as the regional countries consider the security situation in Afghanistan as one of the most important issues. They have also shown their consent that they will support Afghanistan in the war against terrorism.

[Govt to build cold storage unit at Karzai airport](#)

Afghanistan Times | 26th June

The Civil Aviation Independent Authority said Sunday that it would construct a cold storage house at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, the capital city. The authority said in a statement that the construction of the warehouse was ordered by President Ashraf Ghani. The construction of a stock is aimed at support farmers in protecting their fresh fruits and agriculture harvests in the country. Civil Aviation Independent Authority will allocate 1760 meter square inside custom office of the airport.

[Senate to Decide Electoral Reform Decree's Fate on Tuesday](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 27th June

The government has launched a campaign to get approved the second legislative decree on electoral reform from the Senate or Meshrano Jirga, but at the same time incumbent commissioners on the two electoral bodies are demanding the upper house reject the decree.

[Torture Continues in Jails, Despite World Day in Support of Victims](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 27th June

While the 26th June is marked as International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) says prisoners were still being tortured in the county's jails. Earlier the United Nations said that progress had been made to curb torture in Afghan jails, but claimed were still are cases of cruelty against prisoners.

[Pakistani Madrasas Foster Terrorists to Wage War Against Afghans: MoD](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 27th June

Up to 45,000 Madrasas in Pakistan continue to train, fund and send terrorists to fight against Afghanistan, the The Ministry of Defense (MoD) said on Sunday. According to the MoD, terrorists currently fighting the Afghan security forces are fostered in the Pakistani Madrasas. The terrorists are educated and equipped and then dispatched to Afghanistan to attack the Afghan government forces.

BANGLADESH

[NP against militancy, Awami League 'harbouring' it, Khaleda Zia says](#)

Bdnews24 | 26th June

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has said her party is against militancy while ruling Awami League is 'harbouring' it. "Of course we support suppression of militancy, but this Awami League has militants in it," she said at an Iftar party on Sunday. "They (Awami League) have foreign and local guns and ammunition," she added. The BNP chief criticised the recent anti-terrorism drive, saying it was 'nothing but a way to arrest the leaders and activists of her party'. She demanded immediate release of the arrested leaders and activists of her party.

[Dhaka airport security concern grows](#)

The Financial Express | 27th June

The falter of the outdated surveillance equipment at the Dhaka international airport could not be more exposed as in the delay in landing of a flight carrying the Prime Minister and her entourage from Saudi Arabia on June 7 last. This happened at a time when the authorities have launched a move to install a modern multimode surveillance system under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) project, which experts think will put the national security at even greater risk, reports UNB.

[Bangladesh's foreign currency reserves near \\$30-billion mark](#)

Bdnews24 | 26th June

In 2001, Bangladesh had to defer its payments to the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) for imports to avoid compromising the then \$1 billion foreign exchange reserve, as that would have undermined the country's global image. And now, 16 years later, Bangladesh Bank's foreign exchange reserves are set to cross the \$30-billion landmark for the first time, meaning the reserves

have grown by 30 times in all these years. A central bank spokesperson, FM Mokammel Haque told bdnews24.com that the reserves stood at \$29.97 billion on Sunday.

[Bangladesh, Japan to sign deals on six major projects](#)

The Financial Express | 26th June

Bangladesh and Japan will sign deals on six projects under 37th Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan package in Dhaka on June 29. The six projects are: Jamuna Railway Bridge Construction Project, Cross-Border Road Network Improvement Project (Bangladesh), Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit Development Project (II), Matarbari Ultra Super Critical Coal-Fired Power Project II, Energy Efficiency and Conservation Promotion Financing Project and Disaster Risk Management Enhancement Project.

BHUTAN

[Rising multi-drug resistant TB cases](#)

Kuenselonline | 26th June

Despite Bhutan's laudable progress in the Tuberculosis (TB) control programme over the years, the increasing number of multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB) poses a threat to the achievements made so far. Therefore, to review the National TB Control Programme (NTCP), a joint external review mission comprising of experts from CDC, Atlanta and the World Health Organisation SEAR office are in the country as requested by the health minister.

[Govt. allocates budget for local polls](#)

Kuenselonline | 26th June

The government has allocated a total of Nu 75.9 million (M) to the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) for various activities in the financial year 2016-17. According to the new annual budget report, Nu 20M of the total allocation is for holding local government (LG) polls and other poll related activities such as delimitation of parliamentary constituencies and by-elections.

[USD 4.26M for improvement of city roads](#)

Kuenselonline | 26th June

Residents in Lungtenphu, Thimphu will soon have improved and broader roads with road widening work from Semtokha (manidungkhor area) to the Yangchenphug Higher Secondary School (YHSS) parking expected to start in October this year. An engineer with Thimphuthromde's road section said that detailed design and estimate for the road widening work has to be completed by September.

MALDIVES

[Authorities make arrangements to enforce death sentence](#)

Sun Online | 26th June

Maldives Correctional Service has said that the authority was making preparations to enforce death sentence in the country, and that the preparations were not being made to kill any one individual in particular. MCS media officer Ahmed Lugmaan denied media reports that the authority was making arrangements to kill Dr. Afrasheem Ali murder convict – Hussain Humam, 23. Lugmaan said that preparations were being made to enforce death sentence, but it wasn't just specifically so Humam can be killed.

[Committee votes to reduce green tax on guesthouses to USD 4](#)

Sun Online | 26th June

People's Majlis Economic Affairs Committee has voted to reduce USD 6 in green tax proposed by government on guesthouses to USD 4. Tourism bill proposed by government calls for green tax to be taken from tourists who stay at guesthouses, raising concern from people involved in the guesthouse business. Speaking during the Committee discussion regarding the issue, South Mafannu MP Abdulla Rifau said that guesthouses had asked to reduce the green tax during discussions with government.

MYANMAR

[Myanmar torches drugs worth nearly \\$60 million](#)

Mizzima | 27th June

Myanmar police Sunday torched drugs with a street value of nearly \$60 million as authorities struggle to tackle the scourge of

poppy cultivation and shut down pill laboratories in lawless border zones. The impoverished nation remains the world's second biggest producer of opium from which heroin is made, according to the United Nations.

[Amnesty calls for an investigation into the destruction of mosque buildings](#)

Mizzima | 25th June

The Myanmar authorities must undertake a prompt, independent, thorough, transparent and impartial investigation into the violent destruction of buildings in a mosque compound on Thursday in Bago Region in central Myanmar, said Amnesty International in a statement on June 24.

NEPAL

[NHRC calls for torture-free Nepal](#)

The Himalayan Times | 26th June

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Sunday urged all concerned authorities to act together to make the country torture-free. Organising a programme in the presence of Minister for Home Affairs, Shakti Basnet, to mark the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture today, the constitutional human rights watchdog also told the government to implement relevant laws in order to deal with torture-related cases.

[Unite to implement Constitution, Ram Baran Yadav tells parties](#)

The Himalayan Times | 25th June

Former President Ram Baran Yadav has stressed the need for political parties to stand together to implement the Constitution. Speaking at a programme organised in the Capital on Saturday, he said that unity among major political parties was a must to implement the Constitution promulgated with the sacrifices and labour of people.

PAKISTAN

[Terrorists going for softer targets to survive, says COAS](#)

The Express Tribune | 27th June

'Badly bruised and isolated' terrorists will go for softer targets for their survival, warned army chief General Raheel Sharif on Sunday as he directed senior security officials to hunt the terrorists and "pre-empt their moves to frustrate their designs." The army chief travelled to Karachi after the recent targeted killing of qawwali maestro Amjad Sabri and kidnapping of the son of Sindh's top judge within two days. Sabri was shot dead by two motorcycle-riding gunmen in the Liaquatabad neighbourhood of Karachi Wednesday afternoon. A day earlier Advocate Ovais Ali Shah was seized by masked gunmen from outside Agha's Supermarket in the posh Clifton area.

[Pakistan's entry at SCO significant in changing geopolitical scenario](#)

The Daily Times | 26th June

Senate's Standing Committee on Defence Production Chairman Abdul Qayyum said on Sunday that Pakistan's membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was a significant development in the changing geopolitical scenario. "The SCO is an important forum and becoming of its full member especially when new alignments are being made at international level is a significant achievement for Pakistan," he said. He also said that there would be economic as well as military benefits after joining the prestigious forum. He said that increased cooperation with the member states in diverse fields would help Pakistan in achieving sustainable prosperity and development.

[Pakistan reports progress towards implementing UNSC resolution to prevent WMDs' proliferation](#)

Daily Times | 26th June

Pakistan would continue cooperating with efforts to promote "fair and equitable" solutions to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation challenges, a top Pakistani diplomat has said, while working to prevent proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) to states as well as non-state actors. At formal open consultations on the "2016 Comprehensive Review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004)," which aims to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi said that Pakistan had made "remarkable progress" towards the resolution's implementation, and outlined legislative, regulatory, administrative and organizational steps taken in that regard.

SRI LANKA

[Sri Lanka PM says government will take measures to counter economic fallout from Brexit](#)

Colombo Page | 26th June

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe says the government will take measures to counter the economic fallout from the Brexit, the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union. As stock markets and currencies have tumbled

in the wake of Britain's historic vote to leave the EU, Sri Lanka is concerned about Brexit's impact on the island nation's economy as 40 percent of trade agreements between Sri Lanka and the European Union is with the UK.

[Sri Lankan President directs implementation of comprehensive programs for drug prevention](#)

Colombo Page | 26th June

Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena said several programs are being implemented island wide under his direction to eradicate drug menace which affects the development and peaceful environment of the country. The President said that all programs which are being implemented to eradicate drugs would be streamlined and made efficient and proper in the future.

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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