



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

June 28th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 10/6

[US puts Bangladesh on watch list in 'trafficking in persons' report](#)

bdnews24 | 28th June

Bangladesh has been downgraded in the US 'trafficking in persons' report for not making enough efforts to combat the menace. "Official complicity in trafficking crimes remained a serious problem, yet the government did not make efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict allegedly complicit law enforcement, border, and manpower officials," the State Department report said. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson released the report on Tuesday in Washington and said all "must pursue an end to the scourge of human trafficking." Bangladesh managed to hold on in the Tier-2 for the last five consecutive years, but this year it was downgraded to Tier-2 Watch List.

[Pakistan faces challenges in building economic corridor with China](#)

Tribune | 28th June

Pakistan faces some challenges in steering an ambitious plan to build an economic corridor with China despite the economic benefits for the country, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal said on Wednesday. China has promised \$57 billion in investment in projects along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, part of its ambitious Belt and Road plan linking China with the Middle East and Europe. Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the Belt and Road project in 2013, but it is still short on specifics.

[Negotiating with the Taliban for girls' education](#)

Afghanistan Times | 27th June

More than 16 years after the fall of their government, the Taliban say they are willing to allow girls to study, but residents on the ground say the group has done little, if anything, to re-open girls' schools in areas under their control. Ali M. Latifi reports from Afghanistan. Hossai, six, and Shamila, 12, sit quietly, playing with their brightly-coloured scarves as the men of their village tell the story of a U.S. drone strike that killed a truck driver transporting watermelons not far from this simple mud house in the eastern Afghan province of Maidan Wardak.

AFGHANISTAN

[Afghanistan to Hold Elections in July Next Year](#)

Outlook Afghanistan | 24th June

Afghanistan will hold long-delayed parliamentary and district council elections on July 7, 2018, some three years after they were meant to take place, the country's Independent Election Commission said on Thursday. Najibullah Ahmadzai, chairman of the Independent Election Commission (IEC), announced the date at a news conference in Kabul. He said the success of the polls would depend on proper funding and security. "The government has the responsibility to prepare the budget. Security of the election will be the responsibility of the government and security agencies," he said. Preparations for the polls were hit by infighting within a government struggling to contain the Taliban insurgency.

[Noor warns of crisis if reforms not implemented in security sector](#)

Khaama Press | 25th June

The provincial governor of northern Balkh province and the chief executive of Jamiat Islami party has warned the country could be taken to a crisis if reforms are not implemented in the security sector. In a speech released on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, Noor said the security institutions are incompetent and immediate reforms are needed, noting the growing violence as the security forces fail to provide security for the Afghan people. He also harshly reacted at the use of force against the protesters and claimed that the camps were removed by the use of force against the unarmed protesters who were demanding change. Noor also added that certain individuals had instructed the use of weapons against the protesters who were shot with snipers, demanding immediate actions to identify and arrest the culprits.

[Kabul security plan final and will be implemented soon: Ghani](#)

Khaama Press | 27th June

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has said a comprehensive security for capital Kabul has been prepared and will be finalized in the near future. He informed regarding the finalization of the security plan during a meeting with the generals, officers, and personnel of the Afghan army's 111th division in Kabul. According to President Ghani, the security plan for capital Kabul and implementation of the four year security plan will further boost the capabilities of the Afghan national defense and security forces. President Ghani further added that the Afghan security forces are only authorized to use weapons being in the sacred uniform of the army and no one else has the right for the use of the fire arms.

BANGLADESH

[\\$ 441m highway widening project commences shortly](#)

The Financial Express | 27th June

Widening work for a key highway link in Bangladesh will commence shortly. The work will be carried out on the 41-kilometre (km) link from Brahmanbaria's Akhaura logistics centre to the river port of Ashunganj, according to a report by www.WorldHighways.com. The project is costing in excess of US \$ 441 million. Completion of the work is expected in 2020.

[Linking CPEC with BCIM will benefit people: China](#)

The Financial Express | 27th June

Brushing aside India's concerns, China on Monday stressed the need to link the CPEC with the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Corridor. Beijing also said it was willing to wait for New Delhi to join the Belt and Road initiative about which a section in India was unnecessarily "quivering". "These two economic corridors are both important cooperation projects under the framework of Belt and Road," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng

Shuang said, according to a IANS report published in www.sify.com.

BHUTAN

[Three Bhutanese recognised for excellence in leadership](#)

Kuensel Online | 27th June

To recognise and encourage eight individuals, five from India and three from Bhutan for their excellent contribution in their institutions, the Institute of Management Studies and Global leader foundation organised an Indo-Bhutan Friendship summit and excellence award function yesterday in Thimphu. The managing director of Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan, Namgyal Lhendup received the lifetime leadership excellence award while the director of Construction Development Corporation Ltd, Pema Wangchuk received the excellence in construction and allied issues award. Principle of Yadi Central School Kesang Tshering was awarded the excellence in education award.

MALDIVES

[House panel weighs privatizing air traffic control](#)

Sun Online | 27th June

A House panel on Tuesday weighed legislation that would split off management of the nation's skies from the Federal Aviation Administration and give that responsibility to an independent, nonprofit company. The idea is to remove air traffic control from the vagaries of the government budget process. Proponents say Washington dysfunction has hampered the FAA's efforts to update equipment designed to make flying more efficient and safer. The union representing about 18,000 air traffic control workers supports Rep. Bill Shuster's bill. The union says the legislation will protect the workforce and provide predictable funds for the aviation system.

MYANMAR

[Estimated \\$385 million worth of narcotics burnt in Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 27th June

Myanmar, Thailand and Cambodia torched nearly \$1 billion worth of seized narcotics on Monday, a defiant show of force as police struggle to stem the rising flow of drugs in the region. The burnings, to mark the UN's world anti-drugs day, follow another year of record seizures of narcotics from the remote borderlands of Myanmar, Laos, southern China and northern Thailand.

[Myanmar plans to modernize police force](#)

Mizzima | 28th June

Myanmar has planned to equip the country's police force with modern weapons and firearms for use in suppressing riots, said Deputy Minister of Home Affairs Major General Aung Soe, Myanmar News Agency reported Tuesday. Aung Soe told the House of Representatives on Monday that the outdated weapons, currently

used in the police force, are being replaced in three steps with modern weapons, communication equipment, vehicles, oil, uniforms and other set-up needs under annual budget request raised to the parliament.

[Fears for three Myanmar journalists taken by military](#)

Mizzima| 28th June

Fears were mounting on Tuesday for three Myanmar journalists who are being interrogated by the military after they were detained under a restrictive junta-era law for reporting on an ethnic armed group. The three were stopped as they travelled back from a drugs-burning ceremony organised by the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) in the eastern state of Shan to mark the UN's anti-drug trafficking day.

NEPAL

[Nepal-India border in Jhapa sealed for 72 hours](#)

The Himalayan Times| 26th June

The Nepal-India border in Jhapa district has been sealed for the next 72 hours since 6:00 am today for the second phase of local level elections, slated for June 28. Uttam Kumar Khatri, the Chief District Officer in Jhapa, was quoted in Rastriya Samachar Samiti as saying that the checkpoints along the Nepal-India border including the Kakarbhitta and Bhadrapur have been shut for the next 72 hours.

[NRB signs pact with Bank of Korea to develop economic forecast model](#)

The Himalayan Times| 28th June

Nepal Rastra Baank (NRB) today signed a pact with Bank of Korea (BoK) to mobilise assistance from the latter in a bid to develop an economic forecast model. The Research Department of NRB will develop the model under the assistance of the central bank of South Korea. The agreement was signed between Prakash Kumar Shrestha, director of NRB and Jong Suk Won, deputy director general of BoK.

[Explosive goes off in Tulsipur](#)

The Kathmandu Post| 28th June

An explosive device went off near a polling station in Tulsipur Sub-Metropolitan City. The Improvised Explosive Device was detonated near 300 meter from Pratapkot polling station however, there was no casualties or injuries. According to Deputy Superintendent of Police Loknath Timsina the explosion was done to terrorize the voters. "We have further strengthened the security following the incident," said Timsina chief of Area Police Post Tulsipur.

PAKISTAN

[PM Sharif reaches Bahawalpur to condole loss of lives in oil tanker blaze](#)

Dawn| 26th June

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif cut his trip to London short to condole the loss of more than 150 people in the Bahawalpur oil tanker blaze. He reached Ahmad Pur Sharkiya by helicopter before noon Monday to join Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif and other provincial officials in condoling the horrific accident that had shocked the nation a day. Expressing his grievance at the loss of lives, the premier said he empathised

with the pain of those injured and those who had lost loved ones in the incident. He also led prayers for those suffering, wishing all the injured good health and a quick recovery.

[BLA activist surrenders to security forces along with followers, ammunition](#)

Dawn| 28th June

Balochistan Liberation Army activist Abdul Rasool who went by the aliases of 'Ustad', 'Borjon' and 'Boss' surrendered to security forces along with a group of his followers and ammunition. Security officials said that Abdul Rasool was involved in terrorist activities in Pasni, Kulanch, Dashat and Mand areas of Balochistan. According to security officials, the surrender was possible due effective intelligence and successful security operations. The surrender will go a long way in improving lasting peace and stability in areas of Balochistan, security officials said.

SRILANKA

[Sri Lanka exports expected to rise after regaining GSP+ status](#)

Colombo Page| 27th June

Even if Sri Lanka can reach and maintain upper-middle-income country status in the next few years, the country's economy will benefit from regaining the European Union's Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) for at least five years, the global publishing firm, Oxford Business Group (OBG) says. The OBG says the recent decision by the EU to reinstate Sri Lanka to its tariff exemption scheme, designed to assist developing countries in achieving upper-middle-income status, should serve to boost exports and generate renewed private sector investment.

[US notes efforts by Sri Lanka to address human trafficking](#)

Colombo Gazette| 28th June

The Government of Sri Lanka does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so, the US State Department said in its latest report on human trafficking worldwide. The 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2017' states the Sri Lankan Government demonstrated increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period.

[Sri Lanka Army commander promoted and appointed Chief of Defense Staff](#)

Colombo Page| 28th June

Sri Lanka President Maithripala Sirisena, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces has promoted the Commander of the Army, Lieutenant General Crisanthe De Silva to the rank of General to be effective from Tuesday (27 June 2017) and appointed him as the Chief of Defense Staff. General De Silva enlisted to the Army on 6th February 1980 and received his commission on 18th July 1981 as a Second Lieutenant in the Corps of Sri Lanka Engineers. General Crisanthe De Silva has been serving as the 21st Commander of the Sri Lanka Army to-date since 22 February 2015.

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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