



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

May 29th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 11/5

[Trilateral Dialogue to Foster Peace and Stability](#)

Khaama Press/Pajhwok | 29th May
Afghanistan, China and Pakistan have held their first round of trilateral Practical Cooperation Dialogue (PCD) in Beijing, the capital of China, a media report said on Sunday. The three countries agreed to promote practical measures for cooperation and exchanged views on deeper trilateral links during the meeting late on Saturday, according to Pakistani newspaper The Express Tribune. The dialogue was co-chaired by Director General (DG) Mansoor Ahmad Khan from Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, his Chinese counterpart Xiao Qian and Director General Khalid Payenda from the Afghan Ministry of Finance. The three sides noted that trilateral cooperation among was conducive to peace, stability and development of Afghanistan and the region. They appreciated the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and its benefits for promoting regional connectivity.

[Indo-Bangla railway to get new route map](#)

The Financial Express | 28th May
At the beginning of the establishment of Indo-Bangladesh railway link, Bangladesh has proposed to change in the working plan because of certain problems in the execution part of the project. Officials here today stated that in the recently held district magistrate level meeting at Comilla of Bangladesh, the issue was raised by Bangladesh officials.

[Sri Lanka flood rescue efforts continue as death toll rises to 164](#)

Colombo Page | 29th May
Sri Lanka's rescue efforts continued Monday as the death toll from the devastating floods and rose to 164 with 104 people are still missing. In its latest situation report the Disaster Management Center on Monday said 471,542 people belonging to 128,586 families were affected in 15 Districts due to the flood situation while 75,236 people belonging to 18,652 families were located at 336 safe locations.

AFGHANISTAN

[ISIS militants among 50 killed in joint operations of Afghan forces: MoD](#)

Khaama Press | 28th May

At least fifty insurgents including four loyalists of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group were killed during the joint operations of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) personnel, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) said Sunday. According to a statement by MoD, at least 21 insurgents were also wounded during the operations. The statement further added at least 16 of the insurgents were killed during the operations conducted in the outskirts of Tarinkot city, the provincial capital of Uruzgan province and at least three others were wounded while 2 of their hideouts were destroyed.

[Terrorists Hiding, Collecting Money in Pakistan: Ghani](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Pajhwok | 28th May

President Ashraf Ghani says he is still awaiting the implementation of the commitments Pakistan made five months ago to help end the conflict in the country. In an interview with a Pan-Arab daily, Ghani alleged many terrorists were hiding in Pakistan and collecting funds there, but concrete action against the extremists was yet to be taken. He told Asharq al-Awsat newspaper over a million Afghani citizens had started returning to their country from Pakistan and Iran. The Afghans were driving al-Qaeda and ISIS fighters from their areas, he added. About the Arab-Islamic-US summit, the president said it was the first major step towards regaining the glory of Islam as an international civilisation based on science, peace and tolerance.

[‘Over 140,000 refugees return home from neighboring countries’](#)

Afghanistan Times | 28th May

Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation on Sunday said that over 140,000 Afghan refugees returned home mostly from Pakistan and Iran in the past two months. “Some 89,299 refugees from Iran and 55,694 refugees from Pakistan returned home since beginning of solar year,” said Sayed Hussain Alemi Balkhi, refugees minister. He said that over 1,300 Afghan refugees returned to the country from European states, where out this figure 987 were returned voluntarily and 329 were deported. In the year of 2016, Afghan refugees deported from Europe were 580 Afghans, he added.

BANGLADESH

[IAEA Meet: PM Hasina flies to Vienna today](#)

The Daily Star | 29th May

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leaves Dhaka for Vienna this morning to attend a conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) tomorrow. In the two-day conference on May 29-30, in her speech, she will highlight the IAEA's technical cooperation that helps Bangladesh achieve sustainable development.

[Bangladesh rice prices break world record](#)

Prothom Alo | 28th May

Bangladeshis buy the poorest quality of rice at the highest prices in the world. According to the government, a kilogramme of a coarse variety of rice is being sold at Tk 48, setting a new record in the country's economy.

Another South Asia nation, Pakistan, stood second on the chart, but its nationals buy the same variety of rice at Tk 10 less than in Bangladesh.

[SEZs in Bangladesh: India to finalize cos list May 29](#)

The Financial Express | 28th May

A number of Indian developers like Tata Group, DLF and Mahindra, are in the fray for developing the economic zones in Bangladesh. In all, about 25 developers are likely to be selected. The list of companies will soon be handed over to the Bangladesh government for their consideration. Mongla and Bheramara in Bangladesh were identified as possible locations for the SEZs, according to a report by <http://www.thehindu.com>.

BHUTAN

[I hope I made a right decision: Dasho Neten Zangmo](#)

Kuensel | 27th May

The former chairperson of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Dasho Neten Zangmo officially registered as a member of the Bhutan Kuen-Nyam Party (BKP) yesterday at Dewathang, Samdrupjongkhar. She will contest from Dewathang-Gomdar constituency. In a press conference held after the registration ceremony, BKP president, Sonam Tobgay said he has been requesting Dasho Neten Zangmo to join BKP for the last seven years because the party believes she could be a potential leader in the country. "Dasho may have joined any other political parties but she believes the values, commitments and convictions of BKP," Sonam Tobgay said. "We are lucky to have a humble and potential person as a member and we welcome Dasho to BKP."

MALDIVES

[President of Maldives sends message of sympathy to the President of Sri Lanka](#)

Sun Online | 28th May

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has sent messages of sympathy to the President of Sri Lanka, Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister, Ranil Wickremasinghe, on the devastating flooding and landslides in Sri Lanka. In his message, President Yameen said that he was deeply saddened to hear the news of the devastating flooding and landslides, causing to the loss of lives, displacement of countless people and extensive damage to property and crucial infrastructure.

[Elections Commission robbed!](#)

Sun Online | 28th May

Elections Commission of Maldives has been robbed and the money in their safe has been stolen. The theft was discovered when the employees opened the office this morning. In relation to the theft, Member of the Elections Commission, Ahmed Akram said that Maldives Police Service is investigating the break in at Elections Commission office and so no details cannot be released at this time.

MYANMAR

[Secession fears cloud Myanmar peace talks: government](#)

AFP / Mizzima | 29th May

Talks to end decades of bitter civil war in Myanmar have faltered, a government spokesman warned, blaming ethnic rebel demands for greater autonomy, which the military fears could break the country up. The civilian-led

government of Aung San Suu Kyi has made striking a peace deal a key pillar of her administration, but fighting has instead intensified in recent months, with tens of thousands displaced by conflict.

[China-backed militia new powerbrokers in Myanmar peace process](#)

AFP / Mizzima | 27th May

Branded as Asia's most heavily-armed drug dealers, the China-backed ethnic Wa rebels have emerged as key players in Myanmar's peace process, a development seen as strengthening Beijing's influence over its violence-wracked neighbour. When Myanmar's new civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi convened the first round of peace talks with the country's myriad ethnic groups last year, the United Wa State Army's (UWSA) attendance was a side-show to the main action. But as hundreds of delegates gathered in the capital this week for round two of the peace negotiations, all eyes were on the militia.

NEPAL

[Foundation stone laid for Ktm-Tarai expressway](#)

Then Kathmandu Post | 29th May

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal on Sunday laid the foundation stone for the construction of the Kathmandu-Nijgadh expressway, which is expected to reduce travel time between the Capital and the plains to less than an hour from over six hours. The 76 km road project will be helmed by the Nepal Army. Addressing a ceremony at Nijgadh of Bara district, Prime Minister Dahal said the “historic step” of project inauguration has made the entire nation proud.

[EC gears up for second phase of local elections](#)

Then Kathmandu Post | 29th May

While suggestions are making rounds that the second phase of local elections are being postponed for a few days to accommodate the agitating Rastriya Janata Party-Nepal (RJP-N), the Election Commission (EC) has continued with its preparations for holding the polls on planned date of June 14. As the nomination date of candidate for the second round of polls has been fixed on June 2, the EC is set to open offices of the election officers in 461 local units of 41 districts in provinces 1, 2, 5 and 7 on Monday for the purpose.

[Govt tabling budget today](#)

My Republica | 29th May

The government is presenting budget for Fiscal Year 2017/18 in the parliament on Monday. Along with unveiling the government's annual income and expenditure plan, Minister for Finance Krishna Bahadur will allocate resources for the newly formed 744 local units as well for reconstruction works.

PAKISTAN

[Pakistan draws redlines for joining Saudi alliance](#)

Express Tribune | 29th May

Pakistan has decided to draw certain ‘redlines’ for becoming part of the Saudi-led Islamic Military Alliance against Terrorism (IMAT) in an effort to avoid the negative fallout of its participation in the initiative that has potential to undermine ties with neighbouring Iran. It was thought that the government had already joined the alliance when in April it granted permission to former army chief General (retd) Raheel Sharif to lead the 41-nation counter-terrorism alliance. Officials, however, clarified that the final decision had not yet been taken. What compelled

Pakistan to have a second thought was the recent Arab Islamic-US summit in Riyadh where statements from Saudi authorities suggested that the alliance was meant to counter Iran as well as fighting terrorism.

[Pakistan's economic growth still hindered](#)

Express Tribune|29th May

Pakistan faces a barricade on the highway to faster progress. And the identification of this barricade is possible only through the indicators that are relevant. In this context, the most relevant is the growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), along with increment in exports as well as investment in key sectors. Over the past decade, Pakistan never seemed to take off in the export and investment sectors. Thereby, GDP growth was restricted to below 5%. That is a discouraging situation for an economy that has all the potential to have GDP at minimum 7%, export growth at nearly 15% and investment in the engineering, production and marketing sectors at minimum 20%.

[Nawaz bars PML-N MPs from going abroad](#)

Express Tribune|29th May

The prime minister is learnt to have barred PML-N lawmakers from going abroad, ensuring the adoption of the Finance Bill. Sources cited strict orders, requiring lawmakers to seek prior permission from the party's top leadership in case there was any 'grave urgency' for foreign travel, the sources said. Ensuring the maximum presence of the ruling party lawmakers in the National Assembly during the current budget session is seen as an attempt to counter tough opposition in the lower house.

[Pakistan fears Indian influence in Afghanistan, say US spy chiefs](#)

Dawn|29th May

The US intelligence community, in a rare acknowledgement of Pakistan's concerns, has informed Congress that Islamabad does not want heavy Indian influence in Afghanistan and will likely turn to China to offset New Delhi's sway on its western borders. The discussion on Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan was part of a recent congressional hearing on the Afghan war and is linked to a general debate in Washington on the issue. The Trump administration is finalising a new policy for Afghanistan and the ongoing consultations in the White House have generated much interest in the US media and think tanks.

SRI LANKA

[Cyclonic storm 'Mora' brings more rain and strong winds](#)

Colombo Gazette| 29th May

The depression in the East-central Bay of Bengal has intensified into cyclonic storm 'Mora' but is moving away from the island. Under its influence cloudy skies, windy and showery conditions are expected over the country, the Department of Meteorology said. Strong winds of around 80 kmph can be expected over the country (These wind conditions are especially expected over the western slope of the central hills) and surrounding sea areas.

[China to provide US\\$ 2.2 million worth emergency disaster relief goods to Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page| 28th May

The Chinese government today announced that it will donate emergency humanitarian disaster relief goods worth a total amount of RMB 15 million (about 2.2 million US dollars) to Sri Lankan people who were affected by floods and landslides.

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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