

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

June 29th, 2016 | Volume: 2 - 18/6

TOP STORIES

[Afghanistan Mulling to Buy Aircraft and Military Equipment from Russia](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 28th June

The Afghan government is mulling to purchase aircraft and other military equipment from Russia, it has been reported. The Russian Ambassador to Afghanistan Alexandar Mantytskiy has said the Afghan deputy foreign minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai has shared the issue with his Russian counterpart Igor V. Morgulov.

[IMF confirms gradual economic recovery, urges Pakistan to continue reforms](#)

DAWN | 29th June

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) officially endorsed Pakistan's economic recovery but urged the country to continue key structural reforms if it wants to consolidate these gains. "The economic recovery has gradually strengthened and short-term vulnerabilities have further receded on the back of improved macroeconomic stability and progress on structural reforms," said a statement issued on Tuesday by the IMF headquarters in Washington. "Preserving and consolidating macroeconomic stability and further advances with key structural reforms, including beyond the programme's horizon, are needed to foster stronger and more inclusive growth," the IMF statement added. On Monday, the IMF's executive board completed the 11th review of Pakistan's economic performance under a three-year programme supported by an Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangement. The board also approved the 12th tranche of more than \$500 million for Pakistan under this facility.

[Sri Lanka ranks 50th in Human capital Index, bright spot for South Asia region](#)

Colombo Page | 28th June

Sri Lanka was ranked at 50th position globally on the Human Capital Index, which quantifies how 130 countries are developing and deploying their human capital and tracks progress over time.

AFGHANISTAN

[3,000 kgs of explosives seized before reaching Kabul for Eid attacks](#)

Khaama Press | 28th June

At least 3,000 kgs of explosives were seized by the Afghan intelligence operatives before the militant groups manage to transport them to Kabul for a series of attacks. The National Directorate of Security (NDS) said the explosives were packed in 50 sacks and were loaded on two trucks. According to a statement by NDS, the two trucks were identified by the intelligence operatives and were confiscated in Pul-a-Alam district of Logar province.

[Khyber Pakhtunkhwa belongs to Afghans: Achakzai](#)

Afghanistan Times | 28th June

A Pashtun leader Mahamood Khan Achakzai has said that he would not allow anyone to harass Afghan refugees in their "own land". He directly said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province belongs to Afghans and they can live there without fear and irritation. "If Afghans are harassed in other parts of Pakistan, they should come here to the Pakhtunkhwa province, where no one can ask them for refugee cards, because it also belongs to them," Achakzai who leads the Pakhtunkhwa Millie Awami Party said.

[Ghani meets Japanese ambassador](#)

Afghanistan Times | 28th June

President Ashraf Ghani on Tuesday met with Hiroshi Takahashi, the Ambassador of Japan in Afghanistan in presidential place, presidential office said. During the meeting, President Ghani appreciated Japan for assisting Afghanistan in various fields, especially in the areas of cooperative promotional, urban development, agriculture and irrigation and the distribution of scholarships to Afghan students. The president noted that his government would soon construct the first industrial agriculture parks through its national budget in the Kabul New City Project.

[Afghan senators approve President Ghani's decree on electoral reforms](#)

Khaama Press | 28th June

The lawmakers in the Upper House of the Parliament, Meshrano Jirga, approved the legislative decree by President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani regarding electoral reforms. The approval by Meshrano Jirga lawmakers, Senators, comes days after the lawmakers in the Lower House of the Parliament, Wolesi Jirga, rejected the legislative decree unanimously.

[Despite 50/50 Power Sharing, Ghani, Abdullah Still Rivals: Dostum](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 28th June

First Vice-President Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum on Monday lashed out at President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, saying the two leaders remained rivals despite a 50\50 power sharing in the government while his part was missing. Dostum expressed these views late on Sunday in northwestern Faryab province after wrapping up a clearing offensive against insurgents in Dawlatabad district. He complained the president and the CEO did not materialise pledges they had made with him.

[Afghanistan Peace Process Hardly Moving: Gen. Campbell](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 29th June

Former US-NATO forces Gen. John Campbell has stated that Afghanistan peace process is hardly moving forward, urging that both National Unity Government leaders are pushing through to revive peace process again. Meanwhile Harasat and sabat member party has criticized the President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani efforts towards peace process.

BANGLADESH

[PM Sheikh Hasina to discuss Brexit with EU leaders](#)

The Independent | 29th June

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will hold discussions with the European Union (EU) leadership over Brexit and possible future scenarios during the ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) Summit to be held in Mongolia next month, reports UNB. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already confirmed that she will take part in the 11th ASEM Summit of heads of state and government in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia, on 15-16, said EU Ambassador in Dhaka Pierre Mayaudon yesterday.

[ECNEC approves Tk 10.4 billion project for higher education](#)

Bdnews24 | 28th June

Bangladesh's top economic policy-making body has cleared a Tk 10.4 billion project aimed at improving the quality of higher education. The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) approved the 'College Education

Development' project at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Tuesday. The government says the project will facilitate the formulation and revision of educational strategies, streamline recruitment, raise management skill of colleges, and improve honours and Master's courses.

[Bangladesh gets two blue economy projects](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 29th June

Blue economy is a marine based sustainable economic development is an initiative that is taking hold in Bangladesh where two new projects have been granted to the country. The two projects are 'Small scale inland and/or coastal aquaculture project in the Indian Ocean Region' and 'Exploration of economically important marine flora from the Bay of Bengal: a pilot study'. Maritime Affairs Secretary at the Foreign Ministry Mohammad Khurshed Alam said: "We have got foreign funds to implement the projects which will enhance our experience and skills development," to the Dhaka Tribune.

BHUTAN

[NA to deliberate Red Cross bill in winter session](#)

Kuensel | 28th June

In what appeared to be the first deliberation uniting the government and the opposition, the National Assembly (NA) decided to deliberate the Red Cross Society bill in the winter session after its legislative committee presented the bill to the house yesterday.

[110,000 youth to be vocationally skilled by 2026](#)

Kuensel | 28th June

With the implementation of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) blueprint, about 110,000 youth will be skilled in ten years (2016 to 2026), labour and human resources minister Ngeema Sangay Tshempo said during the launch of the blueprint and National Workforce Plan yesterday.

[No significant rise in drug arrests since 2010: Health minister](#)

Kuensel | 27th June

Since 2010, there has not been a significant rise in arrests related to drug use and its illicit trafficking, health minister Tandin Wangchuk said during an event to observe International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, yesterday.

[BCAA lifts ban on drones](#)

Kuensel | 27th June

Revoking its earlier notification restricting the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) or drones, the Bhutan Civil Aviation Authority (BCAA) has issued another notification granting permission to use drones under strict conditions with immediate effect.

MALDIVES

[MP Nihan: PPM member will support tourism bill even if Maumoon pulls support](#)

Sun Online | 28th June

MP for the Villi-malé constituency, and the Leader of the PPM Parliamentary Group, Ahmed Nihan Hussain Manik has said that the MPs of PPM would be supporting the government bill to allow leasing of islands, lagoons and land for tourism without an open-bidding despite the request from the President of PPM and former President of Maldives, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom not to support the bill.

[Maldivian embassy established in Germany](#)

Sun Online | 28th June

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has established a Maldivian Embassy, under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Germany. The decision was made by the President on 22 June 2016. The President's Office said that the embassy was established in an effort to introduce the Maldives to world and gain the support and aid along with other projects for the development of the Maldives as part of the government's foreign policy.

[EC President refuses to give information to ACC without lawyer](#)

Sun Online | 28th June

President of Elections Commission, Ahmed Sulaimaan has refused to answer questions by Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) without legal representation. Sulaimaan, along with three other EC members were summoned to ACC for questioning

on Tuesday. Speaking to press outside ACC, Sulaimaan said that he did not believe ACC's claims that he was summoned to clarify some information, and felt he was personally being investigated.

MYANMAR

[NGOs in Myanmar call for EU agreement proposal to be scrapped](#)

Mizzima | 29th June

The European Union has requested an investment protection agreement with Myanmar which is being criticized by local NGOs in the country, according to a report on the ScandAsia website on 28 June. The report said that the agreement was intended to secure investors from the EU in case of dispute so the dispute could be raised in an international court of law.

[World must focus on poorest children: UNICEF](#)

AFP/Mizzima | 28th June

The world must focus more on helping the poorest children to build on progress achieved in health and education over the past 25 years, UNICEF said Tuesday. In its annual "State of the World's Children" report, the UN children's agency took stock of important gains such as a 53 percent drop in infant mortality since 1990 and a dramatic reduction in extreme poverty.

NEPAL

[Quake relief likely in two instalments](#)

The Himalayan Times | 29th June

Talks among top leaders of the ruling parties and the main opposition Nepali Congress party today failed to reach consensus although they said they were close to it and would find solution tomorrow morning, clearing the way for ending the House disruption by NC. Both the sides said they had tentatively agreed on releasing the money for earthquake victims in two instalments of Rs 150,000 and Rs 50,000.

[Eminent Persons Group to review all aspects of Nepal-India relations](#)

The Himalayan Times | 29th June

The first-ever meeting of Eminent Persons Group on Nepal-India Relations, to be held in Kathmandu next week, will finalise the body's agenda, timeframe, code for its members, as well as working procedures. The meeting will convene on July 4-5 and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister will inaugurate its opening session, followed by an exclusive close-door discussion by its eight members.

PAKISTAN

[ADB approves \\$600m loan package](#)

The Express Tribune | 29th June

The federal government has embarked upon a dangerous path to build foreign currency reserves through borrowings. The Asian Development Bank on Tuesday approved \$600 million loan package for Pakistan, increasing new loan contracts to \$2.1 billion in just a week. Under the latest programme, the ADB will disburse the first subprogram of \$300 million in a couple of days, according to a handout issued by the Manila-based lending agency after the meeting of its board. The second tranche will be disbursed next year. The \$600 million, the ADP said, would help Pakistan roll out major structural reforms to improve the performance and financial sustainability of its public sector enterprises. The loan will be utilised in financing the budget instead of creating any asset.

[Over 2,000 Afghan refugees arrested in Peshawar: KP police](#)

DAWN | 28th June

In a crackdown launched against illegal settlers, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) police have arrested over 2,000 Afghan refugees in Peshawar. The KP provincial government had set June 30 as a deadline for Afghan immigrants to get themselves registered in Pakistan. With the deadline nearing its end, KP police began a crackdown against settlers avoiding registration in the provincial capital Peshawar. According to the KP police, search operations are underway and over 2,000 illegal Afghan refugees have been arrested so far.

[Pakistan's oil and gas discoveries touch record](#)

The Express Tribune | 29th June

Pakistan has made the highest number of oil and gas discoveries in the current month as exploration companies found fresh hydrocarbon deposits in six wells that will add 50.1 million cubic feet per day (mmcf/d) of gas and 2,359 barrels per day (bpd) of oil to the existing production levels. Of these, major discoveries have been made in Sindh that already has a big share in total gas output in the country.

[China releases Rs7.51bn for Orange Line bills](#)

DAWN|29th June

The Chinese government has released \$72 million (Rs7.51 billion) to Punjab as part of running payments out of over \$1.6 billion loan it pledged under an agreement for the Lahore Orange Line Metro Train Project.

SRI LANKA

[Sri Lanka Formally Applies For GSP+](#)

Daily News| 29th June

Sri Lanka formally applied to regain the lucrative European Union's Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) trade concession last evening, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Harsha de Silva said. Sri Lanka applied for the European Union trade concession for garment exports, six years after the country lost the discount over its failure to address human rights concerns.

[Sri Lanka earns over Rs. 11 billion in 2015 from exports of locally manufactured boats](#)

Colombo Page| 28th June

Sri Lanka's Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development Mahinda Amaraweera says the locally manufactured boats currently has a high demand in the international market.

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.

To know more, Please log on to www.anantaaspencentre.in