



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

**June 2nd, 2017| Volume: 3 - 1/6**

[90 Killed, 461 Injured in Kabul Explosion](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Pajhwok| 1st June

At least 90 people were killed and 461 others wounded in a massive suicide bombing in the heart of Kabul early Wednesday. The explosion happened at around 8:30am. Public Health Minister Dr. Ferozuddin Feroz, inquiring after the injured, told Pajhwok Afghan News 461 injured and 90 dead people had been evacuated to Wazir Mohammad Akbar Khan, Jamhoriyat and Emergency Hospitals. More casualties were being taken to other health facilities in the capital city, the minister said, suggesting the death toll could go up. Mohammad Idris Sarwari, in charge of security at the German embassy, confirmed the killing of two Afghan guards of the embassy and injuries to as

[Eurobond debt paid off with Chinese loan](#)

Express Tribune| 2nd June  
Pakistan on Thursday paid back \$750 million Eurobond debt but only after receiving \$1 billion loan from China, as the country struggles to sustain the official foreign currency reserves at their current levels amid mounting foreign payments requirements. Pakistan retired the Eurobond debt of \$750 million, said an official of State Bank of Pakistan. However, despite the retirement of debt, Pakistan's external debt would not reduce, as the country borrowed another \$1 billion from China Development Bank to pay back the old debt.

[President of Sri Lanka assigns flood affected districts to ministers](#)

The Daily News | 2nd June  
President Maithripala Sirisena at a special meeting with members of his government yesterday assigned affected districts to ministers to ensure that they are brought back to normalcy within a period of two months. The meeting which had been summoned at the Presidential Secretariat sought to assess the progress of the government machinery in dealing with the current disaster situation in the country. It also laid special emphasis on the role played by each of the ministers, state ministers and deputy ministers in relief activities in their relevant electorates.

many others. Two more have been missing.

## AFGHANISTAN

### [Taliban suffer heavy casualties in Uruzgan drone strike](#)

Khaama Press | 1st June

The Taliban insurgents suffered heavy casualties during the airstrike in southern Uruzgan province of Afghanistan. According to the local security officials, the airstrike was carried out late on Wednesday night in the outskirts of Tarinkot city, the provincial capital of Uruzgan. A commander of the first brigade of the Afghan National Police Malik Zainullah said the US forces based in Afghanistan carried out airstrike on Taliban insurgents, leaving at least twenty five of them dead.

### [Ghani issues execution order of 11 Haqqani and Taliban prisoners after Kabul attack](#)

Khaama Press | 1st June

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has issued an order for the execution of eleven Taliban and Haqqani terrorist network prisoners after deadly Kabul attack. Sources privy to the development have said the step by the President was taken after the deadly attack in Kabul that left at least 80 people dead. The Afghan intelligence said late Wednesday that credible intelligence information confirms the attack was carried out by the network on direct instructions and with the support of the Pakistani military intelligence, Inter Services Intelligence.

### [Lavrov Urges to Establish Global Coordination after Kabul Attack](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Sputnik | 1st June

The deadly attack in Kabul has become another sign of the necessity to renounce double standards and establish coordination of all external stakeholders, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Wednesday. "An awful terrorist attack ... Another very sinister alarm which signals the need to renounce double standards, finally establish fully-fledged coordination with participation of all external stakeholders without exceptions, the support of Afghan government in the fight against terrorism. Renounce the attempts to use everything that takes place regarding Afghanistan in geopolitical games," Lavrov said.

## BANGLADESH

### [Bangladesh Govt cuts corporate tax for garment](#)

The Daily Star | 2<sup>nd</sup> June

The garment makers have something to cheer for in the proposed budget, as the finance minister has reduced the corporate tax for the sector to 15 percent from the existing 20 percent. The corporate tax for green garment factories has also been reduced to 14 percent, as they are contributing in saving energy, water and environment.

### [Government wants to loot billions out of economy through FY 2017-18 budget, says Khaleda](#)

bdnews24 | 1<sup>st</sup> June

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has described the FY2018 budget as "one to pillage the economy," around an hour

after it was presented in parliament. Finance Minister AMA Muhith unveiled a Tk 4 trillion budget on Thursday. Of the total expenditure, Tk 2.88 trillion is expected to come from the revenue earnings. But the budget, which Muhith claimed to be his best among the 11, will have a deficit of Tk 1.12 trillion, which is 5 percent of the GDP. "This budget, which the finance minister has prepared on the instructions of Hasina (prime minister), has paved the way for the ruling Awami League to loot the economy," she said.

#### [Plan for Indian SEZs in BD hits a snag](#)

The Financial Express | 2<sup>nd</sup> June

India's plan to step up investments in Bangladesh by setting up three mega Special Economic Zones (SEZ) exclusively for Indian companies in the latter's territory has hit a major hurdle, reports thehindu.com Thursday. Citing "constraints, including inadequate infrastructure and lack of uninterrupted power supply" at Mongla, Bheramara and Mirsarai - the sites in Bangladesh for the proposed Indian SEZs, representatives of India Inc. told the Centre at a meeting on Monday that it will not be commercially viable to set up SEZs in the locations.

#### [India to remain beside Bangladesh in all natural disasters: Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Shringla](#)

UNB/ Prothom Alo | 1<sup>st</sup> June

Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh Harsh Vardhan Shringla on Thursday said his country will extend help to Bangladesh as a friendly neighbour during any natural calamities. Shringla made the remarks after the Indian Navy handed over relief materials to the deputy commissioner of Chittagong for the people of the country affected by cyclonic storm 'Mora'.

### **BHUTAN**

#### [Princess Mako arrives in Bhutan](#)

Kuenselonline | 1<sup>st</sup> June

Her Imperial Highness Princess Mako of Akishino of Japan arrived in Bhutan today. Her Royal Highness Princess Euphelma Choden Wangchuck received Her Imperial Highness at the Paro International Airport. Her Imperial Highness is visiting Bhutan on the invitation of His Majesty from June 1 to 7.

#### [Mineral resources belong to the state – DHI](#)

Kuenselonline | 30<sup>th</sup> May

All mineral resources should be with the state, the same way hydro energy is harvested according to Druk Holding and Investments (DHI). During its annual press conference, DHI chief executive officer, Dasho Karma Yezer Raydi said the Constitution guarantees the rights over mineral resources, rivers, lakes and forest to the state, which shall be regulated by law.

### **MALDIVES**

#### [NDMC requests to store food incase traveling becomes impossible](#)

Sun Online | 1<sup>st</sup> June

National Disaster Management Center (NDMC) has requested to store food as a precaution to severe weather conditions impedes the transportation of staple goods. Speaking at a joint press conference by the NDMC, MNDF Coastguard and the Defence Ministry, the Minister of Defence, Adam Shareef Umar said that the seas are becoming unusually turbulent in the continuing rains. And if it get'se worse, it is advisable to store staple goods and use with care expecting the transporation of staple and other goods to be delayed.

## MYANMAR

### [State Counselor's Office to Probe Allegations of Army Abuse in Viral Video](#)

The Irrawaddy | 31<sup>st</sup> May

The Office of State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said in a statement that it had set up a probe into Burma Army abuses depicted in a video that went viral on Facebook over the weekend. In the 17-minute video posted online on May 27, four civilians are shown being accused by Burma Army soldiers of belonging to the ethnic rebel group the Ta'ang Nationalities Liberation Army (TNLA) and appear to be subsequently tortured by a group of military men.

### [Govt Reiterates Rejection of UN Fact-Finding Mission](#)

The Irrawaddy | 31<sup>st</sup> May

Burma's government will not accept members of a UN fact-finding mission appointed to investigate alleged human rights abuses in Arakan, Kachin, and Shan states, confirmed government spokesperson U ZawHtay. "[The mission members] will proceed according to their resolution, we will stand according to our statement released on March 24," said U ZawHtay, referring to Burma's rejection of the UN's resolution to form the mission at the Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva in March.

## NEPAL

### [Prez Bhandari calls on parties to form majority govt](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 1<sup>st</sup> June

President Bidya Devi Bhandari called on the political parties represented in the Legislature-Parliament to initiate the process to form a majority government, the Office of the President said. The president issued the call as per Article 298 (3) of the constitution after the seven-day deadline given to form a consensus government ended today without any result. According to Article 298 (3) of the constitution, the prime minister shall be elected by a majority of all the then members of the Legislature-Parliament, if parties fail to pick a consensus candidate for the post of prime minister in seven days.

### [Voting to elect new PM most likely on Sunday](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 2<sup>nd</sup> June

Voting to elect the new prime minister is most likely to take place on Sunday. However, sources said it will depend on how the CPN-UML responds to the ongoing situation, especially to the vote counting fiasco in Bharatpur Metropolitan City. After the seven-day deadline to pick a consensus prime minister ended on Wednesday, President Bidya Devi Bhandari on Thursday wrote to the Parliament Secretariat to initiate the process to form new government on the majority basis as per Article 298 (3) of the constitution.

## PAKISTAN

### [Swaraj promises to provide visa to ailing Pakistani baby](#)

Express Tribune/ Times of India | 2<sup>nd</sup> June

Tensions between India and Pakistan may be escalating but that has not stopped India's Minister for External Affairs Sushma Swaraj from helping a Pakistani bring his two-and-a-half-year-old baby to India for treatment. Ken Sid, a Pakistani national, reached out to Ms Swaraj for a medical visa as his son has a heart complication

which could not be treated in Pakistan. "He is my son. He does not even know what is happening between India and Pakistan," Ken tweeted to drive home the point that an innocent child should not be deprived of treatment.

#### [SC judges' Sicilian Mafia remark 'regretful', govt says](#)

Express Tribune | 2nd June

The government has denounced a Supreme Court judge's statement likening the attorney general to a representative of the 'Sicilian mafia', saying that the comments were "against the code of conduct" of the apex court. "The comments made by the judge damaged Pakistan's reputation and integrity on an international forum," read a statement attributed to a government spokesperson, issued Thursday evening.

### **SRI LANKA**

#### [UNESCO warns scrapping of SL sites from world heritage](#)

Daily Mirror | 2<sup>nd</sup> June

UNESCO has informed the government that it will be compelled to remove several archeological sites in Sri Lanka from the world heritage list as they have not been maintained properly, Education Minister Akila Viraj Kariyawasam said yesterday. Minister Kariyawasam under whose purview the Department of Archeology comes, told a media briefing that UNESCO had informed him that it would have to remove sites such as Dambulla and Galle Fort from the world heritage list as they were not maintained properly.

#### [EU provides €300,000 to support aid delivery to flood victims in Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page | 2<sup>nd</sup> June

June 02, Colombo: The European Commission is allocating €300,000 (Rs. 51 million approx.) in humanitarian funding to Sri Lanka to bring emergency assistance to communities affected by the recent floods, European Union said in a statement. "This contribution from the EU will allow our partners on the ground to provide relief to the most-impacted families. This is an expression of solidarity from the European people to the people of Sri Lanka," said Christos Stylianides, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management. The EU-funded assistance will focus on the most pressing needs of the affected families in the immediate aftermath of the floods, including access to clean water and sanitation facilities, the provision of essential household items, as well as emergency shelter.

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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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