



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

August 2nd, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 01/8

[India Urged to Launch Special Satellite for Afghanistan](#)

Pajhwok / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 1st August

The Ministry of Telecommunications and Technology (MoTT) has urged the government of India to launch a special satellite for Afghanistan. Najib Nangal, spokesman for the (MoTT), told Pajhwok Afghan News the acting minister of telecommunications and technology, Syed Ahmad Shah Sadat, met Indian Ambassador Manpreet Vohra in Kabul. He said the opening of a terminal for Afghanistan in the South Asia Satellite, another special satellite, small development projects and bilateral relations were discussed at the meeting.

[Top court in Bangladesh revives Supreme Judicial Council to sack its judges](#)

bdnews24 | 2nd August

The Supreme Court has reinstated Supreme Judicial Council, which was introduced by a military government, in the Constitution. SC upholds verdict that ruled parliament's powers to impeach judges illegal. The Appellate Division published the full verdict on the 16th Amendment, repealing the amendment and restoring six clauses of Article 96, on Tuesday – around a month after issuing the summary verdict. The Appellate Division also reformulated a 39-point code of conduct amending the one issued last year for the judges in exercise of powers under the article.

[Pakistan, India Conclude Water Talks in Washington](#)

Dawn | 2nd August

Pakistan and India concluded the much-delayed water talks in the US capital on Tuesday, raising hopes that they would avoid further tensions over an issue that has far-reaching consequences for both. Secretary Water and Power Yousaf Naseem Khokhar led the Pakistani delegation, which included technical experts from his ministry. Ambassador Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhary also attended the two-day talks held at the World Bank headquarters in Washington. Secretary Ministry of Water Resources Dr Amarjit Singh headed the Indian delegation, which also included representatives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

AFGHANISTAN

[Explosion rocks Herat city in West of Afghanistan, dozens feared dead or wounded](#)

Khaama Press | 1st August

A deadly explosion has taken place in Herat city in West of Afghanistan as there are fears that dozens of people have been killed or wounded. The incident took place around 8:30 pm local time near Jawadia mosque in the city but the type of the explosion has not been ascertained so far. At least 29 people have been killed and around 64 others have been wounded in the explosion.

[Attack on Iraq embassy ends as Afghan forces eliminates remaining attackers](#)

Khaama Press | 31st July

The attack on the Iraqi embassy in Kabul ended after the Afghan security forces eliminated the remaining attackers during the clashes which triggered after a car bombing. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) says the three attackers who started resistance with the security forces after the explosion were shot dead after almost four hours of gun battle.

BANGLADESH

[Bangladesh inks cooperation agreement with IOM](#)

The Financial Express | 1st August

The government has signed an agreement with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to further strengthen and expand the cooperation between Bangladesh and the UN agency. With the signing of the agreement, Bangladesh becomes the first member state of IOM under the United Nations (UN) system to sign a full-fledged cooperation agreement granting IOM privileges and immunities similar to those granted to UN specialised agencies.

[Dhaka set to sign UN paperless trade pact](#)

The Financial Express | 2nd August

The country will benefit from introducing paperless trade that can reduce trading time and cost while ensuring trust, accountability and transparency in the system, speakers said Tuesday. They placed importance on capacity building for implementing the electronic system for all kinds of business transactions, and carrying out study on the costs of transitional period. The observations came at a validation workshop on the scoping study of 'Paperless Trade Facilitation in Bangladesh' organised by Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) in the city.

[Bangladesh to buy Cambodian rice](#)

The Financial Express | 1st August

Bangladesh will import rice from Cambodia. The two countries are expected reach an agreement tomorrow, according to an official in the Cambodian Commerce Ministry. Under the deal, Bangladesh will import 1.0 million tonnes of milled rice from Cambodia for 5 years, said Soeung Sophary, the ministry's spokesperson, according to a report by "An agreement will be signed in Phnom Penh on Wednesday between the ministry and representatives of the Bangladeshi government," she added.

BHUTAN

[Agriculture sector commits to meet APA targets](#)

Kuensel Online | 1st August

The ministry of agriculture and forests will have to produce about 60,000 metric tonnes (MT) of vegetables if it has to meet its target of enhancing food security and nutrition. This was one of the commitments the agriculture ministry made when the annual performance agreement (APA) for fiscal year 2017-2018 was signed on July 28

between the Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay and Agriculture Minister Yeshey Dorji. The ministry has targeted to increase horticulture crop production, which includes production of citrus to about 45,000MT and potato production to 60,000MT.

[Cabinet yet to respond on specialist retention strategy](#)

Kuensel Online | 31st July

The health ministry is yet to hear from the Cabinet on the specialist retention strategy it proposed through the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) earlier this year. A committee comprising specialists from the Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital and human resource officials from the health ministry prepared the proposal and submitted to the cabinet. “The strategy was developed because many specialists are leaving,” health secretary Dr Ugen Dophu said. The specialist retention strategy is not only for the medical sector but also for other specialists. A health official with the national referral hospital in Thimphu said the main aim of the proposal was to retain highly qualified specialists in the health system.

MALDIVES

[Adeeb pressed with 9 charges; Ziyath pressed with 25 charges](#)

Sun Online | 1st August

Fresh charges have been pressed against former Vice President and Minister of Tourism Ahmed Adeeb Abdul Gafoor and former Managing Director of Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC), Abdulla Ziyath. Speaking to press this Tuesday afternoon, Prosecutor General Aisthath Bisham said Ziyath has been charged with embezzling money from 25 islands leased for tourism, and that the office was reviewing cases of embezzlement from 30 more islands. The State is owed MVR 613.08 million from the 25 islands.

[Bank of Maldives \(BML\) has been recognized as one of the best employer brands in Asia.](#)

Sun online | 1st August

The bank received the “Asia’s Best Employer Brand Award” from the World HRD Congress and the Employer Branding Institute at a ceremony held at Singapore this morning. The judging panel advised they selected BML for its advanced policies and actions in the areas of recruiting, developing and retaining talent which helped make the Bank one of the most attractive places to work in the region. Deputy CEO BML, Mohamed Shareef and the Head of Human Resources of the bank, Ahmed Ibrahim, accepted the award on behalf of the bank at a ceremony attended by over 300 human resources professionals from the Asia-Pacific region.

MYANMAR

[Secession, Federalism and Decentralization](#)

Mizzima | 1st August

The second session of the 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference ended with the revival of the word ‘secession’ a word that people have long been taboo. The conference reached agreements on 37 points, 12 of which are about politics. The government declared that these agreements are a historic breakthrough, but Major General Gun Maw from the Kachin Independence Organisation, posted via Facebook on 19 May 2017 that it was audacious that they [the government] had declared the success of the conference while there were no representatives elected by respective ethnic minorities. Even if the agreements are a historic breakthrough, there is still no clear or tentative

timeline to fulfill the agreement. In other words, we do not know exactly when the agreements will be implemented, how long it will take to be a federal union and whether the agreements will truly be implemented or not?

[Thailand opens new centres for migrant workers to upgrade their legal status](#)

Mizzima | 1st August

Thailand's Ministry of Labour has opened 99 centres nationwide for Myanmar migrant workers to upgrade their legal status, according to the Embassy of Myanmar in Bangkok.

The ministry began work on 24 July to formalize the legality of migrant workers after new labour regulations took effect on 23 June. The ministry reported that between 24 and 30 July, 35,386 workers from Laos, 72,535 workers from Cambodia and 145,988 workers from Myanmar came to legalize their documents, according to state media. Myanmar workers who have received a Certificate of Identity (CI) will receive a Thai visa that is valid till 31 March 2018 and visa extensions will be possible.

[Hideout discovered in Mayu mountain range](#)

Mizzima | 2nd August

Myanmar's security forces have discovered some hidden tents of suspected terrorists in Mayu mountain range in northern Rakhine state's Buthidaung-Maungtau area, state media reported Tuesday. Along with some construction materials, food and utensils, the hidden tents were found on 30 July during a search for a villager from Yathedaung township who was reported missing in the mountain range. Last week, some 31 suspected terrorists were rounded up by the Myanmar security forces in Maungtau township for holding a secret meeting in Kyauk Hlay kha village.

NEPAL

[Nepal has warm, friendly relations with SAARC members: FM Mahara](#)

My Republica | 1st August

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara has said Nepal has maintained warm and friendly relations with all SAARC member states. During an interaction with a delegation from the national defense academy of Bangladesh at Foreign Ministry today, Foreign Minister Mahara said Nepal, as a member of the UN and an active member of the Non Aligned Movement, is for the foreign policy based on UN Charter, principles of panchasheel and the international law.

[Bharatpur-19 re-election on Friday](#)

My Republica | 2nd August

District Election Office is conducting re-elections in ward number 19 of Bharatpur metropolis on Friday. An all-party meeting on Tuesday unanimously agreed to conduct the elections on August 4 and the same date was later approved by the District Election Office, Chitwan.

[PM Deuba set to visit India from Aug 23](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 2nd August

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba will embark on a five-day state visit to India on August 23 at the invitation of his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi. Officials from both the countries are working to finalise the itinerary, agenda and the size of the delegation, according to sources. PM Deuba's visit to the southern neighbour this time

will focus on implementing the past accords that were signed during his earlier visits in 1996, 2002 and 2004 as the prime minister.

PAKISTAN

[For the record, Imran Khan dodged taxes too using offshore firm : German Journalist](#)

The Express Tribune | 1st August

Frederik Obermaier, a German investigative journalist and one of the reporters who unearthed the Panama Papers scandal, has pointed out that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief Imran Khan too had avoided paying taxes to the UK using an offshore firm. The tweet comes in the wake of the Supreme Court deposing prime minister Nawaz Sharif following a probe into his family's offshore assets that surfaces in the Panama Papers.

[Moody's express fears about Continuity of policies](#)

Dawn | 2nd August

The New York-based credit rating agency Moody's on Tuesday expressed fears that Nawaz Sharif's disqualification as a member of parliament in the Panama Papers case could pose risks to continuity of policies in Pakistan and might impact adversely on its rating.

"If heightened political uncertainty and strife among the various branches of government disrupt the administration's economic and fiscal agenda, macroeconomic stability and the government's access to external finance could be impaired, weighing on Pakistan's credit profile," the agency said.

[For Pakistani, China "Friendship" road runs one way](#)

The Express Tribune | 2nd August

The China-Pakistan Friendship Highway runs over 1,300 kilometres from the far western Chinese city of Kashgar through the world's highest mountain pass and across the border.

For China, the two-lane thoroughfare symbolises a blossoming partnership, nourished with tens of billions of dollars of infrastructure investment. But for many businessmen living and working on the Chinese side of the border, the road is a one-way street. "China says our friendship is as high as the Himalayas and as deep as the sea, but it has no heart," said Pakistani businessman Murad Shah, as he tended his shop in Tashkurgan, 120 kilometres from the mountain pass where trucks line up to cross between China's vast Xinjiang region and Pakistan. "There is no benefit for Pakistan. It's all about expanding China's growth," Shah said, as he straightened a display of precious stones.

SRILANKA

[Sri Lanka Prime Minister assures to resolve debt crisis by 2025](#)

Colombo Page | 2nd August

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has promised to take actions to resolve the country's debt crisis by 2025. The Premier said there was a common goal for President Maithripala Sirisena and for himself when they took over the country in 2015. That challenge was to resolve the huge debt problem in Sri Lanka. The Prime Minister was speaking at the opening ceremony of the new swimming pool constructed at a cost of Rs. 500 million at the Prince of Wales school in Moratuwa.

[UK welcomes return of lands by Sri Lankan armed forces](#)

Colombo page | 1st August

British High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, James Dauris, speaking at the Defense Services Command and Staff College recently, welcomed the renewal of links between British and Sri Lankan armed forces that has happened over the past year. He commended the armed forces on the land releases that have taken place, and said that further releases would continue to contribute to building confidence between communities. In the course of his comments the High Commissioner spoke about the importance of post-conflict reconciliation, drawing on the UK's own experience in Northern Ireland.

[Sri Lanka urges diaspora in Switzerland to return home](#)

Colombo Gazette | 1st August

Sri Lanka today urged the Sri Lankan diaspora in Switzerland to return home and contribute to the development of the country. Minister of Prison Reforms, Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Hindu Religious Affairs, D.M. Swaminathan noted that there are around 50,000 Sri Lankans in Switzerland. He says the Sri Lankans in Switzerland continue to make a significant contribution to Swiss society. "The unity Government has already invited the diaspora including those in Switzerland to return to their motherland and assist in the rebuilding of the country to realise its true potential," he said.

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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