



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

June 7th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 3/6

[Bangladesh leads major Saarc nations in internet access](#)

BSS / The Daily Star | 7th June
Bangladesh has advanced significantly in internet connectivity and effectively led major Saarc nations, with nearly 42.0 percent of total population using internet for various purposes, according to official sources. The latest data from the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) shows that the total number of internet users has reached 67.245 million at the end of February, 2017. The staggering number is around 41.52 percent of the total population of the country, leaving many Asian powerhouses behind with huge margin.

[US says China likely to build more overseas military bases, maybe in Pakistan](#)

Express Tribune | 7th June
A Pentagon report released on Tuesday singled out Pakistan as a possible location for a future Chinese military base, as it forecast that Beijing would likely build more bases overseas after establishing a facility in the African nation of Djibouti. The prediction came in a 97-page annual report to Congress that saw advances throughout the Chinese military in 2016, funded by robust defense spending that the Pentagon estimated exceeded \$180 billion. That is higher than China's official defense budget figure of \$140.4 billion. Chinese leaders, the US report said, appeared committed to defense spending hikes for the "foreseeable future," even as economic growth slows.

[India, Sri Lanka sign agreement for US\\$ 318 million line of credit to develop railway sector](#)

Colombo Page | 6th June
Sri Lanka and India today signed an agreement to provide Indian assistance of US\$ 318 million credit line for the development of Sri Lanka's railway sector. Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Mass media Dr. R H S. Samararatunga on behalf of Sri Lanka and Managing Director of the Export- Import Bank of India Mr. David Rasquinha signed the loan agreement today, at the Ministry of Finance and Mass Media in Colombo.

[Seven killed, 16 wounded in Herat blast](#)

Afghanistan Times | 6th June

At least seven civilians were killed and 16 more wounded in a bomb blast Tuesday in the western and relatively calm province of Herat, local officials said. The incident took place close the Great Mosque, where people had gathered for a mourning ceremony. "The explosion took place in front of the entrance of Great Mosque in Herat City at around 2:55 pm," said Governor Spokesman Jailani Farhad. He said that so far six killed and 15 wounded were reported, adding that the injured had been shifted to hospitals. "Some of the injured are said to be in critical condition," Farhad added.

[India will never be cowed down, Vohra says in react to rocket attack in Kabul](#)

Khaama Press | 7th June

The Indian Ambassador to Afghanistan Manpreet Vohra has said India will never be cowed down as he reacted to the rocket attack in the city today. "A rocket landed in the India House compound at 10:25 am. There were no casualties. Investigations are ongoing," Ambassador was quoted as saying by The Indian Express newspaper. Vohra further added "India has dealt with terror and will never be cowed down by it." No group including the Taliban insurgents has so far claimed responsibility behind the attack.

[Last Chance for Taliban to Join Peace Talks: Ghani](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Pajhwok | 7th June

Inaugurating the Kabul Process conference here, the president said the aim of the meeting was to strike and show solidarity against terrorism, barbarism and move towards a fair peace. "Finding a roadmap to peace in this complex valley of the world is not a simple job," he said. He said the war in Afghanistan had many dimensions and targeting small parts of terrorism would not work until a specific framework was created for resolving the phenomenon, Ghani said. "He asked the Taliban to stop fighting and accept the Constitution, let the women get education and cut ties with terrorist groups. "The government will allow the Taliban to open their office," he said. He said the chance was losing and Afghanistan would finally reject the Taliban, stressing this was the last chance for the Taliban to join the peace process otherwise they would be destroyed.

[Recent Attacks in Afghanistan Show Complex Situation: NATO Chief](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Tolonews | 7th June

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has said that recent attacks in Afghanistan have claimed the lives of many people – which indicates the situation in the country is extremely complicated. He said that the NATO alliance is committed to continuing its partnership with Afghanistan in order to help the Afghan security forces. "We should not step back, because the situation in Afghanistan is difficult, we have seen horrendous attacks and many civilians killed," he said. Meanwhile, President Ashraf Ghani has said the key to peace in Afghanistan is to undertake systematic reforms in the security institutions particularly reforms in the Ministry of Interior (MoI).

[Mattis, Tillerson Met Australian Ministers over Anti-Terror Fight](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Tolonews | 7th June

The high-ranking U.S officials met with their Australian counterparts to discuss the fight against terrorism and ways to stabilize Afghanistan, among others. In their first joint appearance abroad, U.S Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and U.S Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on Monday pledged unity with longtime ally Australia in fighting Islamic extremists who seek to intimidate the West. According to the Associated Press, Mattis and Tillerson spoke

alongside their Australian counterparts at the opening of a joint meeting expected to touch on a range of subjects including defeating Daesh, stabilizing Afghanistan and dealing with North Korea's nuclear threats.

BANGLADESH

[Budget corruption-friendly: TIB](#)

Prothom Alo | 6th June

The Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has said the 'guideless' proposed budget placed for fiscal 2017-18 will institutionalise corruption in the country, reports UNB. The anti-graft agency voiced concern over the proposals of recapitalisation of tax money in corruption-prone banking sector, discriminatory taxation on lower- and middle-income people and continuation of the scope of whitening black money in the proposed budget.

[EU declares Bangladesh as high-risk country](#)

The Financial Express | 7th June

The European Union (EU) has enlisted Bangladesh as a 'high-risk' country for operating cargo services by air and sea to its member countries, reports UNB. This was disclosed by Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon on Tuesday. The minister further said they did not impose any embargo on the cargo operation services or issued any letter to the government of Bangladesh in this regard.

[Don't panic, keep in touch: Embassy to Bangladeshis in Qatar](#)

bdnews24 | 6th June

The Bangladesh embassy in Doha has urged the expatriates not to be panicked amid the evolving situation, and keep in touch with the embassy. In a notice circulated among the Bangladeshis living in Qatar, the embassy said on Tuesday they are "closely" monitoring the situation and are in contact with the Qatari authorities. The statement came as panic spread among the people following diplomatic tensions between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The Saudis together with Egypt, UAE and Bahrain severed their ties with Qatar on Monday.

BHUTAN

[Assembly to seek SC directive on fiscal incentives](#)

Kuensel | 6th June

After some procedural hiccups, the National Assembly yesterday passed the Fiscal Incentives 2016 as a money bill although it was initially introduced as a report. Thirty-one of the 42 MPs present in the House voted 'Yes' for the bill, 10 voted 'No' and one abstained. The bill will be forwarded to the National Council and passed during the ongoing session by both Houses of Parliament.

[Procurement process needs improvement](#)

Kuensel | 6th June

While the government spends over 60 to 70 percent of its budget on the procurement of works, goods and services, the present procurement process, according to the director of works and human settlement ministry's Directorate Services, Dhak Tshering, has many pitfalls. Presenting during the eight engineers, architects and planners conference yesterday, he said that the common pitfalls of present procurement process are poorly delivered contracts, cost and time overruns, quality compromise rescindment of contracts and wastage of public resources.

MALDIVES

[MP Saud summoned for questioning](#)

Sun Online | 6th June

Vilingili MP Saud Hussain has been asked to present himself at the police headquarters for questioning. “Sun” has been informed Saud is required to present himself at police headquarters for questioning at 8:30 pm, coming Thursday. Maldives Police Service has not yet made any official comment regarding the summons.

MYANMAR

[Indian naval ship Sumitra on goodwill visit to Yangon](#)

Mizzima | 7th June

Indian Naval Ship Sumitra, an Offshore Patrol Vessel is visiting Myanmar on a goodwill visit from 6-8 June to hand over disaster relief material to the Government of Myanmar for communities affected by cyclone Mora as a token of the solidarity of the people of India with the people of Myanmar.

[Finance Minister Predicts ‘Take Off’ for Burma Economy](#)

The Irrawaddy | 6th June

The finance minister attempted to reassure investors that Burma’s economy is on a promising trajectory at a trade conference on Tuesday, despite business owners’ concerns that the economy has become tepid. Minister for Planning and Finance U Kyaw Win told the first Myanmar Investment Forum in Naypyidaw that the government would improve its management of economic growth to counter high inflation, a poor trade deficit and higher inflation inherited from the previous administration.

NEPAL

[PM's oath with small cabinet at 1:45 pm](#)

My Republica | 7th June

Prime Minister-elect Sher Bahadur Deuba is preparing to take oath of office and secrecy Wednesday afternoon with a small-size cabinet. According to the President's Office, President Bidya Devi Bhandari is scheduled to administer oath of office and secrecy to Deuba at 1:45 pm at Shital Niwas. As negotiations are still underway to finalize ministerial portfolios among coalition partners, Deuba will assume office with limited number of ministers in his cabinet in the first phase.

[Karki impeachment motion withdrawn](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 7th June

An impeachment motion against Chief Justice Sushila Karki was officially withdrawn from Parliament on Tuesday, a day before her official retirement. Speaker Onasari Gharti during Tuesday’s Parliament meeting informed that the impeachment motion had been officially withdrawn. As many as 249 Nepali Congress and CPN (Maoist Centre) lawmakers on April 30 had filed the impeachment motion against Karki. The Supreme Court five days later on May 5, however, had stayed the impeachment motion, asking the House not to move it forward and allowing Karki to return to office.

PAKISTAN

[New car manufacturing plants face delay](#)

Express Tribune|7th June

The automobile assemblers, which have dominated Pakistan's market for decades, have pressed the government not to give the go-ahead to new players who are planning to set up plants as a green field investment under the incentive-filled new auto policy. This move on the part of existing auto assemblers is in line with the popular belief that they are trying to create hurdles in the way of aspiring new entrants into the market. Last year, the government announced the new auto policy to break the monopoly of three players, which were using obsolete technology and setting higher prices for their vehicles.

[Army's refusal to share LoC casualty stats irks Rabbani](#)

Express Tribune|7th June

The upper house of parliament has sought details of casualties suffered by the military during frequent cross-border exchanges with India along the Line of Control (LoC). Minister of State for Power Abid Sher Ali, in response to a calling attention notice, gave a brief statement in the Senate on Tuesday about the situation along the LoC. Speaking on behalf of Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Ali provided civilian casualties only, saying: "Pakistan Army wants to withhold the information about the losses suffered by its troops due to security reasons'."

[Chinese shy away from buying industrial land in Karachi](#)

Dawn|7th June

Chinese investors have not shown any interest so far in acquiring land in old industrial areas of Karachi including the Sindh Industrial and Trading Estate (SITE). Though Chinese are investing in the auto sector, they do not appear particularly keen on setting up manufacturing plants in other sectors. Market watchers consider the cost of industrial plots as one of the factors discouraging Chinese investment in the port city's industrial base. Chinese are active in the auto sector – especially dealing in light commercial vehicles, cars and vans.

SRI LANKA

[Ravi tells Modi Sri Lanka will continue close partnership](#)

Colombo Gazette| 6th June

Foreign Minister Ravi Karunanayake called on Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today. The Prime Minister recalled his productive and memorable visit to Sri Lanka on occasion of the International Vesak Day last month. He congratulated Karunanayake on taking over his new responsibility as Foreign Minister, the Indian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

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