

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

May 8th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 4/5

[Bangladesh now biggest country of origin for refugees on boats](#)

The Financial Express | 6th May
Bangladesh is the largest single origin of migrants currently arriving on European shores. In the first three months of 2016 just one Bangladeshi arrived in Italy. But the number for the year of 2017 now stands at more than 2,800.

[Yellow Line hits snags as funding not arranged by Chinese firm](#)

Dawn | 8th May
As the Sindh government prepares to launch “Red Line” of the bus rapid transit system (BRTS) in August, a similar project – Yellow Line – hit a snag after the Chinese company tasked with building crucial parts of the mass transit project has so far been unable to arrange funds through its financial institutions under the defined agreement, it emerged on Sunday. The 26.5-kilometre-long Yellow Line project – from Landhi to New M.A. Jinnah road – is to be built with an estimated cost of Rs14.4 billion with 104 new buses on the route.

[Turkmenistan, Afghanistan Mull TAPI Construction Safety in Kabul](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/Trend | 8th May
The issues concerning the safety of construction of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline were mulled at a meeting of the joint Turkmenistan-Afghanistan commission in Kabul, the Turkmen Foreign Ministry said in a message. Turkmen delegation led by Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov was received by President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, according to the message. The sides discussed the construction safety of other infrastructure projects, involving the two countries, as well. Turkmenistan and Afghanistan further mulled the bilateral cooperation in security and providing stability on the common border, as well as in the two countries’ border areas.

AFGHANISTAN

[ISIS head in Afghanistan, mastermind of Kabul military hospital attack killed](#)

Khaama Press | 8th May
The head of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group’s offshoot in Afghanistan was killed during an operation in eastern Nangarhar province of Afghanistan. The Office of the President, ARG Palace, said that the leader of ISIS Khurasan Abdul Hasib was killed during an operation of the Afghan Special Forces in Nangarhar province. A statement by the ARG Palace said Hasib was killed along with a number of the senior ISIS commanders nearly ten days ago.

[Afghanistan reacts at Pakistani claims regarding the killing of 50 Afghan troops](#)

Khaama Press | 8th May
The Afghan government reacted at the remarks of a Pakistani general regarding the killing of at least 50 Afghan troops during the clash in Spin Boldak district located along the Durand Line, dismissing the claims as baseless. The head of the Government Media and Information Center Sediq Sediqi the Afghan government rejects the claim by Pakistani general regarding the killing of 50 Afghan troops by the Pakistani militia forces. Sediqi further added that only two border police forces lost their lives along with civilians and not what the Pakistani authorities are claiming.

[Iran Ready for Talks on Legalising Stay of Afghans](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/Pajhwok | 8th May
Tehran on Sunday expressed its readiness to work together with Kabul on legalising the status of Afghans living in the neighbouring country and offered all possible support to the war-torn nation. Iranian Foreign Minister

Mohammad Javad Zarif voiced Tehran's willingness for consultations with Afghanistan on the issue at a news conference with his Afghan counterpart Salahuddin Rabbani

[High Level Event on Anti-Graft Campaign Today](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/Pajhwok | 8th May

President Ashraf Ghani and EU Ambassador to Afghanistan Franz-Michael Mellbin will co-host a high level 'anti-corruption conference' at the Presidential Palace in Kabul on Monday to mark the end of the European Union's 2017 anti-corruption campaign. "Our campaign has put focus on some of the key challenges when it comes to stepping up the fight against corruption. The conference will address those very same issues," Mellbin, EU special representative to Afghanistan, said in a statement issued on Sunday.

[36 Daesh fighters killed in Nangarhar](#)

Afghanistan Times | 7th May

At least 36 Islamic State (IS), which is also known as Daesh terrorists have been killed in a separate incidents in eastern Nangarhar province, officials said on Sunday. Attaullah Khogyani, provincial governor spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the US drones targeted Daesh militants in Kandaro and Mamandary areas of Achin district on Sunday noon. "27 militants were killed and 13 others received injuries in the attacks," he said.

BANGLADESH

[Bangladesh stands 9th largest market of US cotton](#)

The financial Express | 6th May

Bangladesh is the ninth largest market of US cotton. Textile executives from 12 companies in Bangladesh are visiting US to boost its import from US, report www.fox34.com They are now getting a closer look at cotton in the US to learn more about why it is the world's preferred fiber

[No fuel oil price cut now: State minister](#)

Prothom Alo | 7th May

The government has currently no plan to slash down the prices of fuel oil, state minister for power, energy and mineral resources Nasrul Hamid told parliament on Sunday. The disclosure came in response to question from independent MP Md. Rustum Ali Faraji during a question-and-answer session in parliament. Faraji asked the minister whether the government has any plan to curtail the fuel oil price.

[Qatar keen to recruit skilled Bangladesh manpower](#)

The Financial Express | 8th May

Qatar Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser Bin Khalifa Al Thani has lauded the honest and hardworking Bangladeshi workers now numbering 3,80,000 for their contribution in the development of Qatar. The appreciation came when Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali met him at the Qatari Amiri Dewane (Doha Palace) on Sunday. Foreign Minister Ali thanked the Government and the people of Qatar for hosting Bangladeshi workers and opined that Bangladesh can also provide professionals like physicians, nurses and teachers along with the traditional work force.

BHUTAN

[South Asia Satellite to boost regional cooperation](#)

Kuensel | 6th May

The South Asia Satellite or GSAT-9 was launched yesterday from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, India. Following the launch, a video conference was held among the Prime Ministers of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Lyonchoen Tshering Tobgay in his remarks said that the launch of the South Asia Satellite is a historic moment for our region.

[Press needs to be even more free: PM](#)

Kuensel | 6th May

"Don't be malicious. Report but don't hurt people...If you get it wrong, apologise and do it sincerely." Lyonchoen Tshering Tobgay spoke at length on ethical and responsible journalism to more than 100 hundred journalists gathered to observe the World Press Freedom Day on May 3. He said he felt good that Bhutan jumped 10 places to 84th position in the World Press Freedom index ranking. He said that the trend was good because Bhutan had earlier jumped from 104 to 94.

MALDIVES

[Aasandha services restored to private health facilities](#)

Sun Online | 8th May

Government has made the decision to resume offering Aasandha health insurance services in private health

facilities as before. A senior official from President's Office who spoke to "Sun" this Monday said President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has decided Aasandha services must be restored to private health facilities.

MYANMAR

[Myanmar sends business delegation to Israel](#)

Mizzima | 8th May

As part of the collaboration between Israel and Myanmar, a business delegation of 12 people is visiting Israel this week. It was initiated by the Embassy of Israel in Myanmar along with the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration – DICA, according to a press release.

[Myanmar says fake news being spread to destabilize government, vows action](#)

Mizzima | 6th May

The government of Myanmar has warned it will take action over false news and rumors it claims are being disseminated to cause instability and confusion, state-run media said Friday. In a statement published by the Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper, the office of State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi said false news about the president and state counselor had been spread by accounts with fake names bearing the acronym of the ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) party, which were then being picked up and circulated on social media sites.

NEPAL

[Trump rule won't affect US Nepal policy: Pelosi](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 8th May

Visiting US politicians led by Nancy Pelosi, the leader of the Democratic Party in the House of Representatives and former House Speaker, have said that the US foreign policy on Nepal will not change irrespective of the change in the United States after the election of Donald Trump as its president. In his meeting with the US delegation on Sunday, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal had asked if there would be changes in the US policy on Nepal with the change in administration, according to a senior official present in the meeting.

[House meeting postponed to avoid tussle with judiciary](#)

My Republica | 8th May

Parliament's meeting has been postponed till after the first phase of local level elections, amid confusion over whether the legislature should continue with the impeachment motion filed against Chief Justice Sushila Karki even after the apex court order to put the impeachment on hold. Speaker Onsari Gharti decided to postpone the House meeting till May 18 with a view to avoid further tensions between the judiciary and the legislature over the issue of each other's jurisdictions. Some ruling party leaders were for moving forward with the impeachment motion despite the SC order, claiming that the order was an infringement on the prerogatives of parliament.

PAKISTAN

[Govt plans to expand Super Tax net to individuals](#)

Express Tribune | 8th May

The government has proposed to expand the net of Super Tax to high net-worth individuals and increase sales tax rate to 20 per cent for majority of the population amid differences over these measures between finance ministry and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) headquarters. The finance ministry has expressed doubts over a budget proposal to abolish 25 per cent dividend income tax rate on real estate investors, suspecting that the move is aimed at giving relief to a company owned by Arif Habib Group, said sources in the ministry.

[Budget 2017-18: K-P govt to allocate Rs138b for education](#)

Express Tribune | 8th May

The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) government is planning to increase allocation for elementary and secondary education by 17 per cent to Rs138 billion in the upcoming provincial budget 2017-18. "As the focus of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government is to upgrade the education system in K-P, it has more than doubled the education budget proposal from what the Awami National Party had allocated in the final year of its tenure in 2013," K-P Elementary and Secondary Education Minister Muhammad Atif Khan told The Express Tribune on Sunday.

[Geological survey of two villages agreed upon](#)

Dawn | 8th May

Amid a claim by the military on Sunday that 50 Afghan soldiers were killed in its response to the Afghan attack on security men escorting a census team in two border villages on Friday, officials from the two countries agreed to conduct a geological survey of the hamlets with a view to removing discrepancies in the Afghan maps. The decision was reached on Sunday during the third round of a flag meeting at the Friendship Gate in Chaman. It was

attended, among others, by geological experts from the two countries. The fresh negotiations followed two flag meetings on Friday and Saturday that remained inconclusive.

[Mobile phone service to be launched in parts of Balochistan](#)

Dawn|8thMay

Several districts in Balochistan are going to receive mobile phone and other telecom services for the first time ever as companies are now eyeing more business opportunities in the largest province of the country with the lowest teledensity, thanks to a fast-improving security situation and growing development projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), said officials and analysts.

SRI LANKA

[Sri Lanka expects to make a noteworthy contribution to Asia Pacific economy](#)

Colombo Page| 7th May

Sri Lanka's strategy to improve growth and dilute the debt servicing cost would ensure a noteworthy contribution towards the expected economic growth of the Asian and Pacific regions, island nation's Finance Minister Ravi Karunanayake said.

[Sri Lanka and the Czech Republic renew bilateral cooperation](#)

Colombo Page| 8th May

The Junior Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic Ivan Jancarek met with Additional Secretary of Foreign Affairs (Economic Affairs & Trade, Middle East & Africa, and Political Affairs/West) Mrs. Grace Asirwatham, on 5th May 2017, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Colombo.

[Moody's assigns B1 rating to Sri Lanka's global bond offering](#)

Colombo Gazette| 7th May

Moody's Investors Service ("Moody's") has assigned a B1 rating to the Government of Sri Lanka's US dollar bond offering maturing in 2027. The outlook on the Government of Sri Lanka's issuer rating is negative. Sri Lanka's B1 rating balances the economy's robust growth potential and higher income levels than similarly rated sovereigns against a high government debt burden, low debt affordability, and reliance on external borrowing combined with relatively low foreign exchange reserves.

[Swaraj to hold meeting on arrest of fishermen in Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Gazette| 7th May

Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj is to hold a meeting tomorrow in New Delhi to discuss the issues on the frequent arrest of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lanka Navy and also alleged confiscation of the boats. Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayanasamy said he would seek the External Affairs Minister's intervention to secure the release of the fishermen and their fishing boats, The Hindu newspaper reported.

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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