



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

August 9th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 02/8

[Detained Punjabi insurgent unveil role of Pakistani Islamists in Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press | 8th August

A detained insurgent belonging to Punjab province of Pakistan has unveiled the role of the Islamist groups in the ongoing violence in Afghanistan. The insurgent, identified Esmatullah, was arrested in southeastern Paktia province of Afghanistan, lying close to Durand Line with the tribal regions of Pakistan. Esmatullah made the confessions during a press conference organized by the Afghan security institutions.

[India, Sri Lanka hold broad talks on sidelines of ASEAN meeting](#)

Colombo Gazette | 7th August

Sri Lanka's State Minister of Foreign Affairs Vasantha Senanayake met General Vijay Kumar Singh (Retd.), Minister of State for External Affairs, India on the sidelines of the 50th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Manila, the Foreign Ministry said today. The two Ministers discussed the recent elevation of the longstanding relations between the two countries and excellent cooperation and understanding the two countries presently enjoy.

[Bangladesh to upgrade four land ports to boost trade with India](#)

The Financial Express | 7th August

Bangladesh has taken a plan to modernize and improve four land ports to boost trade with India. Under the plan the government of the country will improve the infrastructure of three land ports. The three ports are - Shaola of Sylhet district, Bhomra in Satkhira district, and Ramgarh in Khagrachari. The security system of Benapole land port under the project will also be modernized.

AFGHANISTAN

[Afghan Special Forces storm key Taliban hideouts in Helmand](#)

Khaama Press | 8th August

The Special Forces of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) stormed some of the key hideouts of the Taliban insurgents in southern Helmand province of Afghanistan. According to the local government officials, the Afghan security forces confiscated missiles, military trucks, vehicles, laptops, explosives, and other equipment during the raids. The officials further added that the first raid was conducted on a hideout of the Taliban insurgents in Nawa district leading to the discovery of a cache of the missiles belonging to the Taliban insurgents. Several missiles were discovered and destroyed by the security forces in area#52 of Nawa district, the

officials said, adding that the insurgents were looking to use the rockets for the attack on Lashkargah city and Shurab military base.

[Congress, White House Dither on Afghan Policy: Tillerson](#)

Outlook Afghanistan / Pajhwok | 9th August

Reports in the US media claimed that the team, tasked to formulate Afghan policy was still struggling with the task, as rifts within the White House and between Congress and the administration had further complicated its job. "We've had now three sessions within the National Security Council exploring a full range of options. And when I say a full range of options, I mean the entire landscape," Tillerson said. A transcript, released in Washington by his office, also quoted Tillerson as telling journalists in Manila that in previous sessions, US President Donald Trump raised some issues that nobody else had done in the past.

[Taliban ban work on development projects in Logar](#)

Afghanistan Times | 2nd August

The Taliban have ordered stopped work on some development projects in Mohammad Agha district of central Logar province, residents complained on Tuesday, a claim the insurgents confirmed. A tribal elder in the district, Siraj Ahmad, told Pajhwok Afghan News that reconstruction work on the Sorkhab-Pul-i-Kandahari, Dehno-Pul-i-Kandahari and Sorkhab-Barg roads had recently been launched. He said the government initiated the development projects after many efforts of local people, but the Taliban banned work on the projects about few weeks back. Meanwhile, a tribal elder in Ahmadzayo village, Mihrabuddin, said the rebels had also set afire four vehicles of construction companies working on the roads.

BANGLADESH

[Sushma Swaraj to visit Bangladesh in Sept](#)

Prothom Alo | 8th August

India and Bangladesh have confirmed that India's external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj will visit Dhaka in the first half of September to attend the fourth Bangladesh-India Joint Consultative Commission (JCC) meeting, reports Hindustan Times. Dates for the proposed visit, however, are yet to be finalised, adds India's English-language daily. This will be Swaraj's second visit to Bangladesh. She last visited the country between 25 June and 27 June, 2014.

[Japanese investors now keen on investment in Bangladesh](#)

The Financial Express | 9th August

Japanese investors have expressed their willingness to come to Bangladesh to explore areas of their investment after their reluctance following militant attack on the Holey Artisan in Dhaka. The interest was shown in a Bangladesh-Japan business-to-business conference held on August 03 and 04 in Singapore. A high-level Bangladesh delegation, led by Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) chairman Kazi Aminul Islam, attended the conference.

[Bangladesh urges UK to recognise 1971 genocide](#)

bdnews24 | 8th August

Bangladesh has urged the UK to officially recognise the 1971 genocide and return the convicted war criminal living

in the country. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam made the request to the visiting British state minister for UN and Commonwealth Lord Tariq Ahmad on Tuesday in a meeting, the foreign ministry said. War criminal Mueen Uddin Chowdhury is now living in the UK. The foreign ministry, however, did not say anything about what was the minister's response to the request.

BHUTAN

[Education ministry short of about 400 teachers](#)

Kuensel Online | 8th August

With the country short of about 400 teachers, education minister, Norbu Wangchuk, said the ministry is trying to address the shortage with various strategies. Lyonpo Norbu Wangchuk said teacher shortage is a trend that occurs every year and remains a challenge. However, he said that the shortage has improved from the past when the ministry faced shortages of more than 1,000 teachers one time. "We agree there are overall shortages of teachers in different subjects, but we should not also deny that the shortages are decreasing every year," Lyonpo said. "We never had enough teachers but we're trying to increase the teacher intake every year to meet the requirement." Chief human resources officer Kinley Gyeltshen said that of the 400, most shortages exist in schools outside the urban centres.

[Govt. not worried about power surplus and tariff falls in India](#)

Kuensel Online | 7th August

The government is not worried about the power surplus in India, the education minister Norbu Wangchuk said during the recent meet the press session. The minister was answering media queries on the government's plan to explore investments other than hydropower since Central Electricity Authority (CEA), India projected power surplus for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. This comes after the CEA, which is India's central electricity regulator and media reports stated that India would have a power surplus of 8.8 percent this year. Lyonpo Norbu Wangchuk said that the CEA's projection on power surplus in India is based on the demand power of distribution companies and not on the actual power need in India.

MALDIVES

[State: Wadde dismissed from PPM after Supreme Court ruling](#)

Sun Online | 8th August

Thulusdhoo MP Mohamed Waheed Ibrahim (Wadde) was dismissed from Progressive Party of Maldives after Supreme Court issued its ruling, says State prosecution. Supreme Court heard Wadde's motion regarding Elections Commission's decision to dismiss him from the parliament this Tuesday. The State prosecution argued that Supreme Court had ruled MPs will lose their parliamentary seat the moment EC informs parliament the MPs' membership to a political party has been terminated. And that EC informed the parliament of Wadde's termination after Supreme Court had issued the ruling.

[President conferred Lifetime Achievement Award by Asia HRD Awards 2017](#)

Sun Online | 8th August

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has been conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Asia

Human Resources Development (HRD) Awards 2017 held tonight in Putrajaya, Malaysia. The Ambassador of the Maldives to Malaysia, Mohamed Fahmy Hassan accepted the Award on behalf of the President. The Award was conferred on the President in recognition of his outstanding contributions towards nation-building and people development, and for the strength and support extended to professionals in the HRD field.

MYANMAR

[US Ford Company make a commitment to Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 5th August

It is early days for American car company Ford in Myanmar as it works to expand its sales in the country. Speaking in response to a question by Mizzima at a press conference last week in Yangon, Ford's ASEAN Region Chairman Mark Kaufman said Ford would make a full investment when the demand in Myanmar significantly rises. Mr Kaufman was speaking at the opening ceremony the Ford Car Showroom in Yangon on July 21. "Currently only 4,000 brand new vehicles are sold each year in the Myanmar car market. In Vietnam this figure is 300,000," he said, referring to the more developed markets in certain other countries in the ASEAN region. The brand new cars refer to both complete knockdown imported cars and domestically assembled cars. Ford's total revenue for 2016 was US\$151 billion.

[State Counsellor's Office issues announcement on protest camps](#)

Mizzima | 8th August

The State Counsellor's Office has issued an announcement thanking people for not joining protest camps in Yangon, Mandalay and Taunggyi. This announcement was issued on August 6 under the title 'Thanks to People'. Some monks calling themselves 'Myochit' (patriots) and lay people staged sit-in protests from August 2 to 5 in Yangon, Mandalay and Taunggyi, demanding the government step down. The announcement thanks people for not joining, supporting and cooperating with the protests. The announcement said the protests calling for the resignation of the government have the intention of destabilizing the country and undermining law and order.

[Red Cross Society of China Provides \\$100,000 Emergency Relief Fund to Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 8th August

The Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) has provided 100,000 US dollars to its counterpart in Myanmar for emergency flood relief, according to a statement. Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Hong Liang handed over the fund to the Red Cross Society of Myanmar (RCSM) on behalf of the RCSC on Monday, August 7. The fund aims to provide water treatment equipment for people in need of clean water in flood-affected areas. According to Myanmar's Relief and Resettlement Department, more than 200,000 people in at least ten out of the country's 14 states and regions have been temporarily displaced due to monsoon rains that have caused seasonal floods.

NEPAL

[MoFA officials involved in trafficking: House panel](#)

The Himalayan Times | 9th August

The on-site report of the sub-committee under the International Relations and Labour Committee of the Legislature-Parliament has alleged involvement of Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials in promoting illegal

migration of Nepalis to Gulf countries. The House panel stated that even after implementing the Directives for Housemaids, MoFA officials engaged in activities that promoted human trafficking for domestic work to Gulf countries.

[BFIs float Rs 89 billion loans to agriculture sector](#)

MyRepublica | 9th August

Lending of bank and financial institutions (BFIs) to the agriculture sector has gone up by 12.6 percent in the eleven months of the last fiscal year 2016/17. With the loans and advances growing up by Rs 9.94 billion on agriculture sector, the total outstanding credit of the BFIs stood at Rs 88.73 billion. The growth rate of lending, however, is lower than the credit growth of the BFIs in this sector of the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year 2015/16. BFIs lending to the agriculture sector had gone up 18 percent, or by Rs 11.74 billion, in the same period of the previous fiscal year, according to the data of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB).

[Chinese firm wants to survey, design Nepal-China railroad](#)

MyRepublica | 9th August

China Railway Eryuan Engineering Group Co Ltd (CREEC), which is involved in the engineering survey and design of world's one of the most difficult railway lines -- Sichuan-Tibet railway, has expressed its interest to take part in survey and design of a cross-border railway link construction project between Nepal and China. Deputy General Manager of the company Zhang Xueca said that experience acquired by the company in the survey and design of the railway link along the highly complex mountain range and active earthquake zones of Sichuan and Tibet makes the company a potential candidate for the construction of the cross-border railway link between China and Nepal in the future.

[House to pass bills on criminal code today](#)

The Himalayan Times | 9th August

The Parliament is set to pass the long-awaited bills related to criminal offences and punishment, which will replace parts of age-old Muluki Ain tomorrow. According to a tentative schedule published by the Parliament Secretariat, Minister for Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Yagya Bahadur Thapa will propose the bills, along with the reports of the legislation committee that were passed two months ago.

PAKISTAN

[First-ever bills on transgender rights tabled in NA](#)

Dawn | 9th August 2017

The National Assembly on Tuesday saw the introduction of two bills aimed at securing the rights of transgender persons in the country. Tabled by JUI-F's Naeema Kishwar Khan during private members' day, the bills include amendments to the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), as well as the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2017.

[Intelligence agency personnel gunned down in Multan](#)

Dawn | 9th August 2017

An intelligence agency personnel was gunned down by unidentified gunmen in Cantonment Bazaar here on Tuesday morning. Mahar Muhammad Yasir Manzoor was riding a motorcycle in Cantonment bazaar when the gunmen on a vehicle shot at and killed him in a drive-by shooting with pistols at 8:37am.

[Nawaz's rally may take four to six days to reach Lahore, says report](#)

Dawn | 9th August 2017

Given the elaborate plans made for reception of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif on Grand Trunk Road, the PML-N rally may take four to six days to reach Lahore from Islamabad, says a report by a premier intelligence agency.

['Concealing UAE Iqamas': Disqualification of three ministers sought](#)

Dawn | 9th August 2017

A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking disqualification of three federal ministers for holding Iqamas of United Arab Emirate (UAE). Mahmood Akhtar Naqvi, who heads an organisation named Khudai Khidmatgar, has named interior minister Ahsan Iqbal, foreign minister Khwaja Asif and finance minister Ishaq Dar as respondents in his petition, alleging they concealed their offshore work permits from the Election Commission of Pakistan.

SRILANKA

[Navy arrests 49 Indian fishermen, 12 fishing trawlers detained](#)

Colombo Gazette | 8th August

Fast Attack Craft attached to the Northern Naval Command and Sri Lanka Coast Guard, whilst on routine patrol, arrested 49 Indian fishermen and impounded 12 fishing trawlers for trespassing into Sri Lankan territorial waters and engaging in illegal fishing last night (07, August) and this morning. Two of the fishing trawlers were impounded in the waters northwest of Delft Island and the rest were taken into custody in the seas north of Kovilan Point.

[Russia sends 32 tons of flood relief supplies to Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page | 9th August

The Russian Federation on the request of Sri Lankan government has sent some 32 tons of relief supplies to Sri Lanka devastated by the recent floods. The Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defense, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters (EMERCOM) said the Ministry has finished loading an Ilyushin Il-76 military transport plane with relief goods for Sri Lanka. The plane left Moscow for Colombo on Tuesday and is carrying mobile power stations, tents and cutlery.

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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