

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

May 22nd, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 8/5

[War on Terror to Dominate Agenda at Saudi Summit](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Tolonews | 22nd May

The Arab Islamic American Summit opened in the Saudi Arabian capital of Riyadh on Saturday with 55 leaders and representatives from 60 Islamic countries in attendance - including visiting U.S President Donald Trump. The summit which has brought together leaders and representatives from the Islamic world will look at ways to build more solid and effective security partnerships to counter and prevent the rising threats of terrorism and violent extremism in the world through promoting tolerance and moderation. President Ashraf Ghani is also in Saudi Arabia for the summit.

[Pakistan deeply committed to Muslim world's unity: PM](#)

Dawn | 22nd May

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Sunday said that Pakistan had a deep commitment to the unity of the Muslim world, and to the promotion of interfaith harmony and dialogue. During his interaction with Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz, US President Donald J. Trump and other leaders from the Arab and Islamic countries who gathered here for the first Arab-Islamic-American Summit, the prime minister said that being the frontline state, Pakistan had rendered remarkable sacrifices in the global fight against terrorism, said a Foreign Office statement.

[China, Myanmar conduct naval drills](#)

Global Times / Mizzima | 22nd May

The Chinese navy conducted its first joint exercise with Myanmar's navy as its fleet concluded a four-day visit to the country. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) navy fleet, composed of three domestically made ships: missile destroyer Changchun, missile frigate Jingzhou and supply ship Chaohu, left Yangon. The visit is part of a 180-day goodwill visit that will tour more than 20 countries in Asia, Europe, Africa and Oceania. The fleet has already visited the Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia, and is now en route for its next stop in Bangladesh.

AFGHANISTAN

[Kabul Bank attack: Three killed, 31 wounded in Paktia](#)

Afghanistan Times | 21st May

At least three people were killed and 31 others wounded on Saturday when a group of armed men attacked the Kabul Bank branch in southern Paktia province, local officials said. "Four armed insurgents attacked the Kabul Bank branch in Gardiz city at around 2:30pm," said provincial spokesman, Abdullah Hasrat. He added that one attacker blew himself up to open way for his comrades to storm the bank building. Shortly after the attack, Afghan Special Forces reached and killed the three attackers in an hour-long gun battle.

[ANA artillery units pound Taliban hideouts in Ghazni, leaving scores dead](#)

Khaama Press | 21st May

The Afghan National Army (ANA) artillery units pounded the hideouts of the Taliban insurgents in southeastern Ghazni province of Afghanistan, leaving scores of militants dead. The Ministry of Defense (MoD) said the ANA artillery units pounded the hideouts of the Taliban insurgents in Waghez district of Ghazni. MoD further added that 48 insurgents were killed in the artillery strikes and at least 28 others were wounded. In the meantime, MoD said at least 5 insurgents were killed and 6 others were wounded in a similar operation in northern Kunduz province of Afghanistan.

[Insecurity and Bureaucracy Threatening Economic Development: Danish](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Tolonews | 22nd May

Second Vice President Mohammad Sarwar Danish said on Sunday that security threats and bureaucracy are two major challenges in the way of Afghanistan's economic development. Danish suggested that there is a need to bring about structural reforms in the trade laws and to establish a joint committee to address the issues facing the

business community and trade sector in the country. Danish made the remarks at a conference on 'Justice, Good Governance and Sustainable Development' in Kabul on Sunday. This event was attended by high-level delegates from ministries.

BANGLADESH

[Trump 'hopes to visit Bangladesh'](#)

22nd May | Prothom Alo

US president Donald Trump has expressed his hope to visit Bangladesh as he exchanged greetings with prime minister Sheikh Hasina during the Arab Islamic-American (AIA) Summit in the Saudi capital on Sunday, reports news agency UNB. "Yes, I would come (to Bangladesh)," foreign secretary Md Shahidul Haque quoted the US president as saying while briefing reporters after the summit.

[SC order on Khaleda's leave-to-appeal in Barapukuria case 28 May](#)

22nd May | Prothom Alo

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has fixed 28 May for giving an order on a leave-to-appeal filed by BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia challenging a High Court order that scrapped her appeal seeking cancelation of the proceedings of the Barapukuria graft case. A four-member Appellate Division bench, led by chief justice Surendra Kumar Sinha, heard the leave-to-appeal petition that was completed on Monday.

[PM for global effort to block terrorists' weapon supply line](#)

22nd May | Dhaka Tribune

Bangladesh maintains 'zero tolerance' policy to all forms of violent extremism, she says. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called for a concerted global initiative to block supply lines of weapons and money to terrorists to ensure the effectiveness of anti-militancy campaign. "We must stop the source of supply of arms to the terrorists and we have to stop the flow of financing to the terrorists and their outfits," she said in a written statement to the Arab-Islamic-American Summit at King Abdulaziz International Conference Center in Saudi Arabia on Sunday.

BHUTAN

[Approved mineral development policy triggers reforms](#)

20th May | Kuensel Online

The mineral development policy that languished between the Cabinet and the Department of Geology and Mines (DGM) for eight years is now approved for implementation. The need for the policy was felt more when the mining sector was mired in issues of corruption, mismanagement and weak governance as pointed out in reports of the Anti-Corruption Commission and Royal Audit Authority.

MALDIVES

[ACC advises to hold payments to Hajj Groups](#)

21st May | Sun Online

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has advised the public to hold their payments to the companies taking people on the Hajj Pilgrimage since they have ordered the Islamic Ministry to slow down the permit phase for the Hajj Groups. Three days ago, Ministry of Islamic Affairs announced that they would be giving quota for the number of people going on the pilgrimage to five private companies along with the Hajj Corporation.

[President attends Arab Islamic American Summit](#)

22nd May | Sun Online

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has attended the "Arab Islamic American Summit" held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia today. The President is currently on an official visit to Saudi Arabia on the invitation of the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. The aim of the summit is to establish an Arab Islamic-American Alliance in the fight against terrorism. The attendees of this summit include Arab and Islamic Leaders, and the President of the United States, Donald Trump.

MYANMAR

[ANP Chairman: NLD Should Build Trust With Military, Amend the Constitution](#)

The Irrawaddy | 18th May

Arakan National Party (ANP) chairman Dr. Aye Maung has urged the ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) to build trust with the Burma Army, with an eye to amending the military-drafted 2008 Constitution through Parliament. "Wouldn't a constitutional amendment benefit the peace process? If the NLD thinks so, there must be a channel to amend the Constitution—and that would be amending it in Parliament," U Aye Maung, who is also the lawmaker for Ann Township, told reporters in Naypyidaw. While in opposition, the NLD held nationwide campaigns with the 88 Generation Peace and Open Society to amend Section 436, which restricts further amendments to the Constitution.

NEPAL

[No attack on judiciary, govt tells UN body](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 22nd May

Defending the impeachment motion against Chief Justice Sushila Karki, the government has written to the Geneva based UN human rights body that the move was constitutional. In a letter addressed to Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Parliament and Minister for Foreign Affairs, UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers Diego García-Sayán had expressed concerns over the impeachment motion against Chief Justice Karki.

[Prosperity thru air, road connectivity: Indian envoy Puri](#)

The Himalayan Times | 22nd May

Indian Ambassador to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri said Nepal can gain abundant advantages from its southern neighbour with proper utilisation of air and road connectivity between the two countries.

PAKISTAN

[US-Arab-Islamic Summit: Trump urges Muslim leaders to confront extremism](#)

Express Tribune | 22nd May

US President Donald Trump called on Arab leaders to do their fair share to “drive out” terrorism from their countries on Sunday in a speech that put the burden on the region to combat militant groups. Saying he came with “a message of friendship and hope and love”, Trump told dozens of Muslim leaders that the time had come for “honestly confronting the crisis of extremism”. “This is a battle between barbaric criminals who seek to obliterate human life, and decent people of all religions who seek to protect it. This is a battle between good and evil.”

[Khanani and Kalia probe: 21 people, firms sent Rs356m abroad through illegal channels](#)

Express Tribune | 22nd May

A fresh investigation against Altaf Khanani – the director of the country’s largest money exchange firm Khanani and Kalia – has unearthed the names of 21 individuals and companies who transferred money abroad using illegal Hawala and Hundi channels. Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan ordered a reinvestigation after Khanani gave a statement in the United States, where he was arrested and faced criminal proceedings. Khanani was sentenced to 68 months in prison and fined \$250,000 by an anti-money laundering court.

[Motivated by quick returns, govt overspending on infrastructure development](#)

Express Tribune | 22nd May

The preparations of the budget are under way and as usual the focus of the government is on ‘hardware’. The ‘hardware’ means development spending on highways, motorways, metros, bridges and airports. As a consequence, the government has set a consolidated development outlay of around Rs2.1 trillion for the upcoming fiscal year. Spending on ‘hardware’ has been the corner stone of the current government since 2013. Under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the government was facing a hard budget constraint. Therefore, it could not spend the allocated amount of the development budget and curtailed it to meet the performance criteria.

SRI LANKA

[Scores arrested in Chennai during protest on Sri Lanka war](#)

Colombo Gazette | 22nd May

Scores of pro-Tamil activists were detained at the Marina in Chennai when they tried to hold a memorial for Tamil victims of the last leg of the Sri Lankan ethnic strife as the famed seashore is out of bounds to hold protests, the Press Trust of India reported.

[Lanka in unofficial talks with UK on exports](#)

Colombo Gazette | 21st May

The Government has initiated unofficial discussions with the United Kingdom with regard to exports post Brexit. Dr. Harsha de Silva, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs told The Sunday Leader Brexit will not have a major impact on Sri Lankan exports to Europe, Sri Lanka’s single largest export market.

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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