

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

February 22th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 10/2

[Afghan intelligence playing into Indian hands, Pervez Musharraf claims](#)

Khaama Press | 21st February
The former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has claimed that the Afghan intelligence is playing into Indian hands, reiterating on his previous stance against the Afghan security institution. In an interview with a private TV channel, Musharraf claimed that the Afghanistan National Directorate of Security (NDS) was being used as a tool for facilitating terror groups in Pakistan. "This operation (Zarb-e-Azb) cleaned up all the camps and launching pads of terrorists, who were supported by the Indian spy agency with the collaboration of NDS, to destabilise the tribal areas," he said.

[Dostum reject siege of house by Afghan forces and differences with Ghani](#)

Khaama Press | 21st February
The First Vice President General Abdul Rashid Dostum has rejected his house is under siege by the Afghan security forces, calling the reports as propaganda by the enemies to spark tensions among the government leaders. Speaking during a gathering in his house late on Tuesday evening, Dostum said he has no differences with President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and rejected that his was under siege. Dostum further added that the Afghan security forces were deployed due to security related issues having links with the neighboring areas lying close to his residence.

[Regulatory bodies notification suspended](#)

Dawn | 22nd February
The Lahore High Court (LHC) has suspended a notification by the federal government transferring administrative control of five regulatory bodies to their respective line ministries. At a hearing on the matter on Tuesday, LHC Chief Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah observed that the prime minister should have sought approval from the Council of Common Interests (CCI) before issuing the notification.

AFGHANISTAN

[Zakhilwal for lessening of tension with Pakistan](#)

Afghanistan Times | 21st February
The Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan, Umer Zakhilwal has held constructive meetings with the civil and military leadership of Pakistan on Tuesday, where he emphasized on reduction of tension between the two countries. Zakhilwal said, "I had a "very good meeting" with Pakistan Foreign Affairs Adviser Sartaj Aziz and also had a "constructive and positive talks" with Pakistan Army in General Headquarters (GHQ) on my return from Kabul on Tuesday." He added, "I expect de-escalation of the current tension and the creation of a more positive environment for responding to each other's concerns in a cooperative manner. We have agreed tentatively on a path forward."

[19 Daesh militants killed in Nangarhar](#)

Afghanistan Times | 21st February
At least 19 fighters loyal to the Islamic State (IS), also known as Deash terrorists were killed during an operation in eastern Nangarhar province, within past 24 hours, security official said. In a press statement, the Nangarhar

press office, said that these fighters were killed in Haska Meena and Achin district of the province during air and ground raids. Seven Daesh fighters were killed and two others wounded in Haska Meena district during air and ground raids, added statement. Likewise, 12 other Daesh fighters were killed during airstrike in Achin district, noted statement.

BANGLADESH

[UN envoy visits Cox's Bazar Rohingya camps](#)

AFP / Prothom Alo | 22nd February

UN human rights envoy Yanghee Lee was Tuesday visiting Rohingya refugee camps in southeastern Bangladesh, where thousands have taken shelter after fleeing a military crackdown in Myanmar. Almost 73,000 Rohingya have arrived in Bangladesh since the military unleashed a four-month campaign of violence against the stateless Muslim minority that the United Nations says may amount to crimes against humanity. The refugees, most of whom are now living in squalid camps in the Cox's Bazar district which borders Myanmar's Rakhine state, have brought harrowing accounts of systematic rape, killings and torture at the hands of the military.

[Bangladesh to launch second undersea cable today](#)

The Financial Express | 21st February

Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited (BSCCL) in charge of the Bangladeshi portion of the SeaMeWe-5 project – has revealed that commercial services over the new infrastructure will be launched today (21 February). Managing Director of state-owned BSCCL Monwar Hossain disclosed this earlier, according to a FE report published last month.

[India mulls cargo train to Bangladesh](#)

The Financial Express | 21st February

Bangladesh is the ninth biggest market of India. So India wants to reduce cost of border trade. That it is cheaper to move goods by rail than road is common knowledge. Also, that the congestion at the Petrapole-Benapole border is making the \$6-billion India-Bangladesh trade unduly costly, according to a report by Business Line.

BHUTAN

[Think tank recommends implementation of BBIN agreement](#)

Kuensel Online | 21st February

Even as it remains uncertain whether or not Bhutan's Parliament will ratify a motor vehicle agreement involving Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN), experts and government officials from the sub-region have called for immediate implementation of the ambitious road connectivity plan. The calls were made during a two-day BBIN conference organised by Kolkata-based think tank CUTS International from February 16 to 17 in the capital city of West Bengal. Overall, participants agreed that the agreement should be implemented despite the challenges.

MALDIVES

[Nasheed meets UN Human Rights Commission](#)

Sun Online | 21st February

Former President of Maldives Mohamed Nasheed has met with United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights, Prince Zeid bin Ra'ad. Nasheed met with Prince Ra'ad this morning in Geneva, Switzerland. President Nasheed's Office said that the ex-President informed the UN High Commissioner on the regressing political state of the Maldives.

[Sewage system project inaugurated in Gaddhoo](#)

Sun Online | 21st February

The sewage system project has been inaugurated in Gaafu Dhaalu Gaddhoo today. The project was officially inaugurated at a special ceremony by the Environment Minister, Thoriq Ibrahim. The Environment Ministry said that an eight-kilometer sewage network along with a sewage treatment plant capable of processing 410 tons of waste would be installed in the MVR 41 million project by the state and the loan from the Opec For International Development (OFID).

MYANMAR

[Letpadaung villagers protest against mine company](#)

Mizzima | 22nd February

About 100 residents from the town of Letpadaung protested on Tuesday against the Chinese company that operates a controversial copper mine in northwestern Myanmar's Sagaing region, RFA reported on 21 February. The protesters blocked the road to the mine and demanded that Wanbao Mining Copper Ltd. Company give them the 1,900 acres of land they were supposed to receive according to the recommendations of a parliamentary commission, the report said quoting Ko La Pyae from Moegyopyin Ale village.

[India plans to sell refined crude oil products to Myanmar](#)

Mizzima | 21st February

India plans to sell refined crude oil products to Myanmar as part of New Delhi's efforts to deepen ties with its eastern neighbour, which is expected to see strong demand for fuels as it builds new roads, factories, utilities and airports, the Times of India reported on 20 February. Indian oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan began a five-day trip to Myanmar on Monday, scouting for opportunities in oil exploration, refining and products retailing.

NEPAL

[Nepal-Israel chamber set up](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 22nd February

Nepal-Israel Chamber of Commerce and Industry has been established to promote and boost bi-lateral trade, investment and other economic relations between the two countries. The establishment of the new chamber was initiated by Israel's Ambassador to Nepal Yaron Mayor.

[NRB offers some relaxations to release funds for BFIs](#)

My Republica | 22nd February

As the banking industry grapples with the mismatch in deposit and credit growth that have causing shortage of lendable fund, the Nepal Rastra Bank has come up with some relaxations to the BFIs which will free up some funds for them to float as loans.

PAKISTAN

[Islamabad, New Delhi extend safety accord](#)

Express Tribune | 22nd February

Pakistan and India have agreed to extend their bilateral agreement on reducing the risk from accidents relating to nuclear weapons in a move suggesting the two rivals are still mindful of nuclear dangers despite currently strained ties. The key agreement was extended for the next five years (2017-2022), said a statement issued by the Foreign Office on Tuesday. The agreement came into force in 2007. It was subsequently extended for a period of five years in 2012. The accord is part of the nuclear confidence building measures agreed between Pakistan and India. The aim of the agreement is to promote a stable environment of peace and security between the two countries, reads the official handout.

[2,000 Rangers sought for Punjab; will be given police powers](#)

Dawn | 22nd February

Punjab has requested the federal government to deploy over 2,000 Rangers personnel in the province whom it will allow police powers to conduct intelligence-based operations (IBOs) against terrorists, wherever required, with full authority. The province had been resisting such powers of police officers for Rangers whenever the issue of their deployment to fight terrorists here came up in the past. Officials say the force is now being called in and given such powers specifically for IBOs.

[TTP commander, 8 militants killed in Karachi police 'encounter': SSP Anwar](#)

Dawn | 22nd February

Police claimed to have killed eight suspected terrorists, including a commander of the proscribed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in an 'encounter' in Karachi's Malir area on Wednesday. An operation was conducted after intelligence agencies confirmed the presence of TTP commander Gul Zaman in Malir, Senior Superintendent of

Police (SSP) Malir Rao Anwar told reporters. One of those killed in the encounter has been identified as Taj Arif Lala, who was involved in numerous targeted killings and kidnapping of factory owners, the SSP said. A 16-year-old, suspected of being a suicide bomber, was also killed in the encounter.

SRI LANKA

[Representatives of US Congress laud Sri Lanka's transformative process](#)

Colombo Page | 21st February

A bipartisan delegation from the United States House of Representatives visiting Sri Lanka paid a courtesy call on President Maithripala Sirisena on Tuesday at the Presidential Secretariat.

[NDB Bank records PAT of Rs. 3.2 billion for 2016](#)

Colombo Page | 22nd February

National Development Bank Plc recorded a post-tax profit (PAT) of Rs. 3.17 billion for its financial year ended 31 December 2016, a 10 percent reduction over 2015's PAT of Rs. 3.511 billion.

[Sri Lankan Navy accused of chasing away 3000 Tamil Nadu fishermen from island waters](#)

Colombo Page | 21st February

Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu have accused the Sri Lankan Navy personnel of snapping their fishing nets and chasing them back to Indian waters while they were fishing near the Katchatheevu islet.

[Japan tightens entry requirements for Sri Lankan students](#)

Colombo Gazette | 22nd February

Japan has decided to tighten its entrance requirements for overseas students from five countries including Sri Lanka, as part of its efforts to prevent illegal immigration, the Global Times reported. According to Japanese newspaper Nishinippon Shimbun, Japan's Immigration Bureau notified nearly half of the country's Japanese language schools in February, in which at least 10 students were either expelled or dropped off in 2015, to adopt stricter policies for overseas students from five countries, namely, China, Vietnam, Nepal, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka.

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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