

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

January 25th, 2017| Volume: 3 - 11/1

[Trump and Putin must work together on Afghanistan: Karzai](#)

Khaama Press|24th January

The former Afghan President Hamid Karzai has said the US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin must work together on Afghanistan. During an interview with Agencia EFE on Friday, Karzai said he would wait to see the first steps he takes in the fight against extremism in Afghanistan. "Now that President Trump has recognized the need for friendship with Russia, which is a good thing that I admire in him, he must as soon as possible sit down with President Putin (Vladimir Putin of Russia) and chart a common way forward," Karzai said.

[13 Pakistani suspects among 16 arrested in Saudi Arabia on terror charges](#)

The Dawn|25th January

Saudi security forces have arrested 13 Pakistanis and three Saudis suspected of having links to terrorists who blew themselves up during a weekend firefight with police, authorities said on Tuesday. The Saudi interior ministry also identified the two terrorists who detonated explosive belts during Saturday's raid in the Red Sea city of Jeddah as Saudis Marzouk Anzi and Khaled al-Sourwani had both taken part in previous terrorist attacks in the kingdom, and Sourwani had links with the militant Islamic State (IS) group, the ministry said.

[Banks in liquidity crunch 'trap'](#)

Himalayan Times|25th January
The rapid credit expansion as compared to the sluggish deposit collection has pushed the commercial banks into a 'trap' of liquidity crisis or shortage of funds that they can extend as loan to the borrowers. Banks expanded credit in a rapid manner along with normalisation of economic activities following the trade disruptions of last fiscal 2015-16, as they were under pressure to maintain the same level of high profitability even after the increment of paid-up capital as per the requirement of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), the central bank.

AFGHANISTAN

[Dispute over water: 'Iran fueling insurgency to keep Afghan govt busy'](#)

Afghanistan Times |24th January

Iran has been fueling insurgency in the southern Helmand province to divert the central government attention from water dispute between the two states, provincial official said on Tuesday. Briefing newsmen in Lashkargah, the provincial capital, Helmand's governor Hayatullah Hayat said, "It has been for four years that Iran increased its support to the Taliban militants in a bid to keep the flame of war erupting in the province."

[China to support uplift projects](#)

Afghanistan Times |24th January

Finance Minister Eklil Hakimi and Urban Development Minister Sayed Saadat Mansoor Naderi met with Yao Jing, Ambassador of People's Republic of China to Kabul on Tuesday, talking on Beijing's support to the construction and development projects in Afghanistan, the ministry of finance said. "They discussed bilateral cooperation between Afghanistan and China, fund and implementation of developing projects, building 10,000 residential apartments,

railway, construction of new building of Ministry of Finance in Dar-ul-Aman and some other important subjects,” it said in a statement.

[Afghan Forces Have Frustrated Daesh Designs: CEO](#)

Pajhwok/Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 25th January

Abdullah Abdullah has said the Islamic State or Daesh has become an international threat but the Afghan forces have frustrated the group’s designs in Afghanistan. Abdullah, who attended the burial ceremony of former High Peace Council chief Pir Sayyed Ahmad Gilani on Monday, was talking to security forces on the way back to Kabul from Nangarhar.

[Germany Sends Group of Migrants Back to Afghanistan](#)

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 25th January

The German authorities have sent 26 refugees back to Afghanistan within the framework of a deportation campaign adopted in 2016, German media reported Tuesday. According to the Tagesschau broadcaster, the German authorities deported on Monday a group of young Afghan men, among which there were reportedly some criminals.

BANGLADESH

[BB to announce new monetary policy Jan 29](#)

The Financial Express | 23rd January

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) is likely to announce its Monetary Policy Statement (MPS) for the second half of the fiscal 2016-17 (FY17) on January 29. "We're going to launch MPS for January-June period of FY17 on January 29," a senior BB official told BSS on Monday.

[BD bids to borrow \\$500m from India](#)

The Financial Express | 23rd January

The government bids to borrow US\$ 500 million from India for bankrolling economic zones (EZs) planned across Bangladesh under a special industrialisation recipe.

[Int'l labour unions demand fair treatment of RMG workers](#)

Prothom Alo | 24th January

Two international labour union groups have launched an online campaign calling on the government of Bangladesh to “immediately and unconditionally” release garment trade union leaders detained in recent weeks. The Industrial Global Union and UNI Global Union also called for reasonable treatment of garment workers, including fair pay.

BHUTAN

[JSWSL receives growing global partnership interest](#)

Kuensel Online | 24th January

In two weeks, 499 students will compete for the 25 seats in the country’s first law school, Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law (JSWSL). Of the 499 applicants from 54 higher and central schools, 55 percent or 272 were women and 227 men. JSWSL’s vice dean, Michael Peil, said: “Taking in only five percent of the applicants, we’re more selective than reputed law colleges in the West such as Stanford University.” Besides being the first law school in the country, the school will groom lawyers in a unique dispute resolution cases.

MALDIVES

[Maldives Foreign Minister: Chinese investments would be increasing](#)

Sun Online | 24th January

Foreign Minister Dr. Mohamed Asim has said the the Maldives welcomes Chinese investments and the number of Chinese investments in the country are expected to increase in the future. Speaking at the reception at Hotel Jen

tonight to celebrate the Chinese New Year, Dr. Asim highlighted the close relations between the Maldives and China. The Maldivian Foreign Minister said that the two countries are closer than ever before and highlighting the Chinese President's visit to the Maldives and the two visits by the President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom to China in the last three years, he said that such visits displays the relations between the two countries.

[President: Huge Saudi investment coming to F. Atoll](#)

Sun Online| 24th January

President Abdullah Yameen Abdul Gayoom announced Saudi Arabian government has expressed interest in investing in a huge project in F. Atoll. President Yameen made the announcement during function held this Tuesday to inaugurate F. Magoodhoo harbor. During the inauguration, President Yameen said top officials in Saudi government were very interested in investing in F. Atoll.

MYANMAR

[Struggling Rakhine State farmers want more government support](#)

Mizzima| 24th January

On a recent morning, Zeyar Lin was tending to his water melons, which he grows in dry season after the rice harvest at his farm near Thandwe town, in southern Rakhine State. The 35-year-old once worked as a farm labourer in Thailand, but decided to return to his native Thayet Taw Village to rent a plot of land. He used his savings and loans to buy a small tractor to plough and harvest his crop.

[One killed in small armed clashes in Myanmar northern state](#)

Mizzima| 25th January

Small armed clashes have occurred between the government troops and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), leaving one dead in the border town of Muse, Myanmar's northern Shan state, Myanmar News Agency reported Monday. The KIA attacked the government troops from about six kilometers east of Mawtaung village in the township Sunday when the latter were conducting area clearance operation.

NEPAL

[PM announces to double insurance cover of migrant workers](#)

Kathmandu Times|24th January

In what would bring cheers to the Nepali migrant workers, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal on Tuesday unveiled an ambitious plan to provide insurance cover to Nepali workers going to India and double the insurance cover for those going to other 110 work destinations. According to the government plan, each migrant workers bound to labour destinations except for India will now have to buy life insurance and general insurance coverage worth Rs 2 million from Jan 28. The announcement was made during a press conference organised at PM's residence in Baluwatar. Migrants going to India, who will have to take permission from the concerned district administration office from February 12, can buy the insurance worth up to Rs 1.25 million.

[Parties continue to bicker over threshold](#)

Kathmandu Times|25th January

Threshold continues to be the major bone of contention as a subcommittee under the State Affairs Committee (SAC) of Parliament plans to pass the Bill to Integrate and Amend Laws Related to Political Parties on Wednesday. Lawmakers from major parties such as the Nepali Congress (NC) and the CPN-UML have stood in favour of keeping 3-5 percent threshold under proportional electoral system, while smaller parties are against it, as they fear the provision could deprive them of representation in provincial assemblies and federal parliament.

[India to measure whether Everest shrank in Nepal quake](#)

Kathmandu Times|25th January

The Indian government has announced it will measure the height of Mount Everest for the second time to assess whether it changed as a result of the 2015 Nepal earthquake. Surveyor-General Swarna Subba Rao said an expedition

would be sent to the world's highest mountain in two months. Satellite data has indicated the quake impact reduced the height of the peak. The most widely recognised height, 8,848m (29,028ft), came from an Indian survey 62 years ago. Scientists have said that the height of a swathe of the Himalayas dropped by around one metre shortly after the 7.8 magnitude Nepal earthquake.

PAKISTAN

[Zardari urges Trump to do what Obama 'never did'](#)

The Express Tribune|24th January

Former president Asif Ali Zardari has urged US President Donald Trump to seize an opportunity missed by the Obama administration and appoint an envoy for the South Asia region. The Pakistan Peoples Party co-chairperson urged Trump to appoint a high-level envoy to South Asia, as soon as possible, and work towards defeating terrorism — something former US President Barack Obama failed to do. “[Do] what [President] Obama never did — Obama never had proper interaction with any Pakistani chief executive,” he said. Zardari further urged critics to give him a chance to make his mark in South Asia rather than “dismiss him out of hand”.

[Pakistan conducts first flight test of surface-to-surface Ababeel missile](#)

The Express Tribune|24th January

Pakistan has successfully test-fired indigenously-developed surface to surface nuclear-capable missile Ababeel, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said Tuesday. “Pakistan successfully conducted first flight test of SSM Ababeel, Range 2,200 kilometres,” DG ISPR Major General Asif Ghafoor tweeted. According to the military’s media wing, the missile is capable of delivering multiple warheads, using Multiple Independent Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology. “The test flight was aimed at validating various design and technical parameters of the weapon system,” a statement said.

[Two vessels inducted into maritime agency fleet](#)

The Dawn|25th January

“Our maritime sector has gained unprecedented limelight in the context of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Along with the Pakistan Navy and the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency [PMSA], all operational resources are being optimised by the government to safeguard the sea routes of CPEC as an obligation because it is a pivotal socio-economic project not only for Pakistan and China but the entire region,” said Defence Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif on Tuesday.

SRI LANKA

[US-Lanka Navy cooperation enhances maritime security](#)

Colombo Gazette| 23rd January

The USS Hopper (DDG 70) concluded its five-day port call to Colombo today as part of a visit to strengthen growing U.S.-Sri Lankan ties and express appreciation to the Sri Lankan Navy for its assistance during an emergency medical evacuation of a USS Hopper crewmember in September 2016.

[Taranjit Singh Sandhu assumes duties as new Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page| 24th January

Taranjit Singh Sandhu, the new High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka, presented his credentials to President Maithripala Sirisena on 24 January 2017 at a ceremony at President's House in Colombo.

[Sri Lanka earns a profit of Rs 1.2 billion from fish exports in 2016](#)

Colombo Page| 24th January

Sri Lanka has earned a profit of Rs. 1.2 billion by exporting fish in 2016, the Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development Mahinda Amaraweera revealed at a progress and performance review meeting held at the Ministry on 16th January.

[Sri Lanka hopes to further strengthen relations with India](#)

Colombo Gazette| 24th January

The Government says it hopes to further strengthen the long-established Indo-Sri Lanka relations. Taranjit Singh Sandhu, the High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka, presented his credentials to President Maithripala Sirisena at a ceremony at the President's House in Colombo today.

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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