

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

April 17th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 6/4

[10 rockets seized before being fired on Kabul city](#)

Khaama Press | 16th April

At least ten rockets were seized by the Afghan security forces before the militants manage to fire them on Kabul city. The Kabul police commandment said the rockets were placed and were prepared for the attack in Khak-e-Jabar district. The rockets were transferred to Hesarak district of Nangarhar to Khak-e-Jabar for the attack, the police commandment said, adding that the rockets were of BM1 type.

[Despite Jadhav's sentence: Nawaz-Modi meeting very much on cards](#)

Express Tribune | 17th April

Relations between Pakistan and India are once again at their worst. The last thing the two sides needed was controversy over Indian Navy officer turned RAW agent Kulbhushan Jadhav, who was sentenced to death for not only espionage but also being behind a series of terrorist attacks in Pakistan. His conviction has drawn condemnation from across the border with India calling the death sentence 'premeditated murder.' In India, there was even talk of severing diplomatic relations with Pakistan. But as has been the case in the past, the two nuclear-tipped neighbors may bring yet another surprise, as Foreign Office officials and diplomatic sources do not rule out the possibility of a meeting between the prime ministers of the two countries in June.

[Oman opens doors for Sri Lanka exports to enter Gulf market](#)

Colombo Page | 16th April

In a new breakthrough for Sri Lankan exports sector, one of the fastest growing free ports in the world, and one of the biggest free-ports in the powerful Gulf Cooperation Council has opened its doors to Sri Lanka with unparalleled incentives of entry, Minister of Industry and Commerce Rishad Bathiudeen disclosed.

AFGHANISTAN

[Afghanistan has strong US and NATO support to defeat terrorism: Gen. Murad](#)

Khaama Press | 16th April

Afghanistan has a strong support from the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the fight against terrorism and for the defeat of the terrorist groups, the Deputy Chief Staff of the Afghan National Army (ANA) forces General Murad Ali Murad said. Speaking to reporters in Kabul today, Gen. Murad said the visit by U.S. National Security Advisor, Mr. McMaster demonstrates the strong support of our allies in defeating common enemy. Gen. Murad further added Gen. Mc Master met with the National Security Adviser of Afghanistan Mohammad Hanif Atmar NSA and then will meet the Ministry of Defense authorities.

[Moscow Offers to Facilitate Talks between Afghan Govt-Taliban](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Pajhwok | 16th April

Russia has offered to host peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban, a media report cited the Russian foreign ministry as saying on Saturday after it hosted diplomats from the regional countries in Moscow. "The third round of consultations on the Afghan issue was attended by representatives of Russia, Afghanistan, China, India, Iran, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan," the Russian Tass news agency quoted a foreign ministry statement as saying. This was the third meeting Russia has hosted in four months to push for political negotiations. "The US had been invited to take part in the consultations but it refused [to attend] for reasons unclear to us," it added.

[MoPH Assures People MoAB Bomb was Not Toxic](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ ToloNews | 17th April

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) on Sunday said that preliminary assessments show that the recent use of a GBU-43, a Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB), also known as the 'Mother of All Bombs', by the U.S military in Achin has had no impact on people's health in the district. Preliminary assessments by the ministry of public health shows that the bomb has not affected the health of residents in Achin, said Wahid Majroh, head of the international relations department of the ministry of public health. The ministry of health says that no one should make uninformed guesses about side-effects of the bomb.

[Iran Hosts 3 Million Afghan Refugees: Rahimpour](#)

Outlook Afghanistan | 17th April

Iran joined a number of regional countries in Russia for a new round of International Afghanistan Peace Conference to find a diplomatic solution to problems that have plagued Afghanistan for years. Delivering a speech at the conference in Moscow, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs Ebrahim Rahimpour outlined Tehran's stances on the situation in neighboring Afghanistan, News Agency reported. Rahimpour noted that Iran has been hosting some three million Afghan refugees over the past decades, voicing Tehran's readiness to cooperate with the Kabul government for the establishment of peace in Afghanistan and for the settlement of local and regional problems, including drug trafficking and security issues.

BANGLADESH

[Bangladesh to import 2,000 MW power from India: Nasrul Hamid](#)

Bdnews24 | 16th April

Bangladesh will import 2000 MW electricity from India in next two years, said State minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid. Bangladesh and India signed 22 agreements and memoranda of understanding during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to New Delhi.

[Govt sets growth target at 7.4pc](#)

The Daily Star | 17th April

The economic growth target for fiscal 2017-18 has been set at 7.4 percent, as the government looks to leverage the low inflation rate and the strong momentum generated this year from the political calm. "Our GDP growth target for the current fiscal year is 7.2 percent. We have achieved it," Finance Minister AMA Muhith told reporters after a meeting of the fiscal coordination council and resources committee, where the targets for the upcoming budget were fixed.

BHUTAN

[ACC prosecuting Trongsa land case unconstitutional: OAG](#)

Kuensel Online | 15th April

With the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) taking up the alleged illegal Trongsa land transaction case, which was initially dropped by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), prosecutors are now questioning the legal standing of the ACC to prosecute the case. ACC officials had told Kuensel that the Commission is taking up the case as per section 128 (3) of the ACC Act, which gives them the authority to prosecute a case. The ACC also added

that they are taking up the case because the OAG manipulated the case. OAG prosecutors shared that section 128 of the ACC Act is unconstitutional and that it is only the OAG that has the authority to prosecute cases.

[Bangladesh PM visits next week](#)

Kuensel Online | 15th April

On the invitation of His Majesty The King, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be in the country on a three-day state visit from April 18. While in the country, the Bangladeshi Prime Minister will sign several Memoranda of Understanding and also attend the ground breaking ceremony of the Bangladesh embassy in Hejo, Thimphu. Bangladesh gave land to build the Bhutanese embassy building in Dhaka in 2014. PM Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the three-day International Conference on Autism and Neuro Developmental Disorders on April 19.

MALDIVES

[Police seize Qasim's phone with Court Order](#)

Sun Online | 16th April

Maldives Police Service has seized the phone of the Jumhooree Party Leader Qasim Ibrahim with a court order. Hisaan Hussain from the JP Leader's legal team confirmed to Sun Media that Qasim's phone has been seized. But he did not give any further details on it.

[Seerat barred from leaving Bangladesh without police permission](#)

Sun Online | 16th April

Kashmir native Seerat Paruveen Mohamed – who Radha Athif's parents suspect of involvement in their daughter's death in Islami Bank Medical College in Rajshahi, Bangladesh - has been barred from leaving Bangladesh without permission from the police. Seerat was a fellow classmate and friend of Maldivian medical student Raudha, 21, who was found dead in her dorm room on March 29.

MYANMAR

[Former Exiled News Outlets Granted Licenses for State Media Channel](#)

The Irrawaddy | 12th April

Two former exiled news outlets—the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) and Mizzima—have been selected to run their own digital channels in Burma under the state-owned Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV). In late 2016, the Ministry of Information (MOI) put out a call to local companies interested in becoming content providers for MRTV. Out of the 42 that expressed interest, 29 submitted formal proposals, which were then shortlisted to 10.

[Questions over UNFC members attending Pangkham summit](#)

Mizzima | 16th April

The New Mon State Party (NMSP) will not attend the summit meeting of ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) scheduled to be held in Pangkham, the general headquarters of United Wa State Party (UWSP). NMSP Vice-Chairman Nai Hong Sar said that they received an invitation to attend the Pangkham summit of seven EAOs which are non-signatories of Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) to be held on April 15 but they could not attend this meeting as they were preoccupied with other meetings.

NEPAL

[Prez on 'special goodwill' India visit](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 17th April

President Bidya Devi Bhandari's state visit to India beginning on Monday is a special goodwill visit, which, officials of both countries say, will help strengthen bilateral ties further. Officials said on Sunday there would be no agreements or signing of memoranda of understanding during the trip but the occasion will be used to speed up implementation of the ongoing bilateral trade, connectivity and development projects.

[First-ever Nepal-China joint military training begins](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 16th April

The first ever Nepal-China Special Forces joint training has begun Sunday at the Nepal Army's barrack in Maharajgunj in the Capital city. The Nepali Army (NA) personnel together with the China's People's Liberation Army's (PLA) squad are participating in the military exercise named 'Sagarmatha Friendship-2017'.

[Koirala, Thapa appointed Nepal envoys to Qatar, Israel](#)

The Himalayan Times | 17th April

President Bidya Devi Bhandari on Sunday appointed Ramesh Prasad Koirala and Niranjana Kumar Thapa as Nepal's ambassadors to Qatar and Israel respectively. The appointments were made in accordance with Article 282(1) of the Constitution, according to the President's Office.

[Government issues Systematic Settlement Commission Order 2017](#)

Himalayan News Service / The Himalayan Times | 17th April

The government has issued Systematic Settlement Commission Order, 2017 to manage and develop planned and systematic settlements. As per a notice published by the Ministry of Land Reform and Management in the Nepal Gazette, the order also aims to check encroachment of government, public and trust land while solving squatters' problem.

PAKISTAN

[Low-cost housing: Reviving a grandiose but forgotten scheme](#)

Express Tribune | 17th April

The recent announcement by the federal cabinet about launching a grandiose low-cost housing scheme appears to be recycling its own promises pledged right after coming into power in 2013. As it enters the final year of its five year tenure, the government has finally started tapping long forgotten projects which it openly advertised in November 2013, terming it its flagship project. The decision to go ahead with the project was taken on April 12 by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif after a presentation by Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal.

[Railways suffered 338 accidents in four years](#)

Express Tribune | 17th April

Over the past four years, Pakistan Railways has suffered 338 minor and major accidents, in which 118 people have lost their lives. According to a written answer submitted in the National Assembly in response to questions raised by a lawmaker, as many as 149 accidents were major and 189 were minor. Data suggested that railways accidents surged between January 2013 and December last year.

[People who cast blasphemy accusations need to be educated, says Imam-i-Kaaba](#)

Express Tribune | 17th April

Imam-i-Kaaba Sheikh Saleh Bin Mohammad Bin Ibrahim, in an interview with Geo News, said when it comes to accusing someone of blasphemy, there are two types of people, "those who are illiterate and those who misuse Islam for personal gains", adding there is no reprieve in religion for the latter. Ibrahim's comments came when a debate surrounding the Blasphemy law has resurfaced following the lynching of a university student in Mardan by an angry mob, comprising mainly of other fellow students, based on blasphemy allegations.

SRI LANKA

[Death toll from garbage dumping site collapse rises to 20](#)

Colombo Gazette | 16th April

The death toll from the collapse of the Meethotamulla garbage dumping site rose to 20 by this morning. The Colombo National hospital said that 12 others were receiving treatment in hospital.

[Japan to send technical team to Sri Lanka following disaster](#)

Colombo Gazette | 16th April

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has received a message of condolence, addressed to the Government and people of Sri Lanka, from the Prime Minister of Japan, Hon. Shinzo Abe, expressing his heartfelt condolences,

and that of his Government and people, on the recent disaster at a garbage dump in Sri Lanka, which has led to the unfortunate loss of life and property.

[India Customs arrests two Sri Lankans smuggling over nearly 3 kg of gold bars](#)

Colombo Page| 16th April

Indian Custom officials have arrested two Sri Lankan nationals at Mumbai international airport for allegedly trying to smuggle gold bars worth over Rs 8.7 million into the country. The officials arrested Jameer Wahid (42) and Althaf Hameed, both holding Sri Lankan passports when they arrived at the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport in Mumbai from Dubai by an Emirates Airlines flight in the wee hours of Sunday, PTI 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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