

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

May 1st, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 1/5

[Burma Turns Down Chinese Assistance in Addressing Refugee Crisis in Bangladesh](#)

The Irrawaddy | 28th April
The Burmese government will not accept China's offer to help mediate affairs in restive Arakan State, but "will collaborate" with Bangladesh, according to the President's Office spokesperson U Zaw Htay. According to Bangladeshi foreign ministry officials, China has offered to help tackle a diplomatic row between the two countries over the plight of tens of thousands of Muslim minority Rohingya who fled violence in Arakan State and sought refuge in Bangladesh since late 2016.

[Afghan President had serious negotiations with Pakistani delegation: Muslimyar](#)

Khaama Press | 30th April
The speaker of the Upper House of the Afghan Parliament, Meshrano Jirga, Fazal Hadi Muslimyar, said President Ghani had serious negotiations with the delegation of the Pakistani Parliament during their visit to Kabul. Speaking during the general session of the Upper House of the Parliament, Muslimyar, said President Ghani shared the concerns and issues of Afghanistan with the Pakistani delegation.

[US should persuade Pakistan to rethink Afghan policy: ICG](#)

Dawn | 1st May
The United States should condition its military aid to Pakistan to force Islamabad to rethink its alleged support to the Afghan insurgency, says a report released by the International Crisis Group (ICG) on Sunday. The transnational think tank, which provides policy inputs to the World Bank, the United Nations and the European Union, emphasises the need for the international community to get more actively involved in resolving the Afghan conflict.

AFGHANISTAN

[Pakistani and Kazakh ISIS loyalists arrested in Ghor province of Afghanistan](#)

Khaama Press | 30th April
At least four militants affiliated with Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group were arrested in central Ghor province of Afghanistan. According to the provincial officials, the detained militants have confessed that they belonged to Pakistan and Kazakhstan and were looking to join ISIS militants in Ghor province of Afghanistan. Provincial police Chief Ghulam Mustafa Mohsini confirmed that four individuals were arrested as they were trying to travel to Bala Morghab district.

[Afghan Special Forces seize 1000 kgs of explosives in Parwan](#)

Khaama Press | 30th April
Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) Special Operations personnel seized at least 1,000 kilograms of explosives during an operation in northern Parwan province. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) said "Based on intelligence report, General Command of Police Special Units carried out a security operation in the Sayad village, Bagram district of Parwan province." A statement by MoI said "As a result, General Command of Police Special Units has seized 1,000 kg of explosives."

[Danish Visits Nangarhar, Invites Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to Kabul](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ KP | 1st May
The Second Vice President Mohammad Sarwar Danish on Sunday visited eastern Nangarhar province leading a delegation of high level officials to attend in a gathering organized to welcome the leader of Hezb-e-Islami

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Speaking during the gathering in Jalalabad city, the provincial capital of Nangarhar, Vice President Danish said no individual or group can achieve power through violence and use of force.

[Karzai to Pakistani delegation: Insecurity in Afghanistan affects Pakistan situation](#)

Afghanistan Times | 30th April

Former President, Hamid Karzai on Sunday said that insecurity in Afghanistan affects the situation in Pakistan. "And if the situation in Pakistan is insecure, it affects Afghanistan situation," Karzai told a high-level delegation from the National Assembly of Pakistan who met the ex-president in Kabul.

BANGLADESH

[699 workers died in workplace accidents in 2016: Report](#)

Prothom Alo | 1st May

At least 888 workers died and 1093 were injured in workplace-related accidents and violence in Bangladesh in 2016, says a new study. The study titled 'Occupational Accident, Violence and Industrial Dispute-2016' also claimed that there had been 73 incidents of kidnapping, 22 suicide incidents and three missing incidents in 2016, reports UNB. The study conducted by Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) released on Sunday claimed that 699 workers, including 28 women, were killed in workplace accidents.

[No mercy for negligence in haor embankment construction: PM](#)

Prothom Alo | 30th April

Bangladesh Awami League (AL) president and prime minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday warned that no one will be spared if any negligence is found in haor embankment construction, reports UNB. "The government is not only providing relief materials to the flood-hit people, it'll also distribute all necessary agricultural inputs free of cost for their next crop, she told a civic gathering in Sunamganj. Hasina is now in the district to see for herself the flood-affected areas where Boro crops on over two lakh hectares of land were damaged, causing a colossal loss to the livelihood, fish and livestock of farmers.

[PM Hasina warns against rise of food prices on pretext of flood](#)

The Financial Express | 30th April

Prime Sheikh Hasina on Sunday warned against hoarding and increase of the prices of food grains in plea of flood in the northeastern haor areas saying tough actions would be taken against such a malpractice. "There is no shortage of food in the country, and haor areas supply a very small portion of the national food demand. So there is no reason of increasing the prices of food grains on pretext of shortage," she said asking the officials to remain vigilant about this.

[Bangladesh seeks Canadian support in its journey towards a middle-income country](#)

bdnews24 | 28th April

The foreign minister has sought more Canadian support in Bangladesh's journey towards a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed country by 2041. "In this journey, we would like to see Canada as a close and reliable partner with enhanced assistance and cooperation in social, economic, infrastructure, technological and human resources development sectors," Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali said on Thursday. He was speaking at the celebration of the 150th years of Canada Confederation by Canada- Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CanChem) in Dhaka.

BHUTAN

[Legislative procedure blocks BBIN agreement withdrawal](#)

Kuensel | 29th April

The government is preparing to move a motion to withdraw the controversial motor vehicle agreement involving Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) during the joint sitting of the Parliament next month. To save it from being scrapped in the Parliament, the government had wanted to withdraw the BBIN agreement from a voting process. This decision to withdraw remains even as the government has informed the other member countries that once it completes the ratification process, Bhutan would join the group.

MALDIVES

[Contracts signed to install renewable energy source in Northern Maldives](#)

Sun Online | 30th April

Contracts have been signed with a Chinese company to develop and install electricity service through renewable energy sources in Haa Alifu Atoll. The Ministry of Environment and Energy have been working to establish hybrid systems to produce renewable power in the Maldives. A portion of the first phase of the project has now been completed and has begun services. The contracts signed today were for the second phase of the project.

MYANMAR

[WB assists Myanmar with economic reforms](#)

Mizzima | 29th April

The World Bank approved a \$200 million credit for a First Macroeconomic Stability and Fiscal Resilience Development Policy Operation, to assist the Government of Myanmar in promoting macroeconomic stability and fiscal resilience. The new assistance, approved April 27, aims to help Myanmar maintain a stable economy needed for growth and poverty reduction, and increase budget resources for greater access to quality public services.

NEPAL

[Nepali Congress, Maoist Center file impeachment motion against CJ](#)

My Republica | 1st May

In a dramatic development, lawmakers from the ruling Nepali Congress (NC) and CPN (Maoist Center) registered an impeachment motion against Chief Justice Sushila Karki at the parliament secretariat on Sunday. The move has triggered a series of major political developments, including the resignation of Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Bimalendra Nidhi and the decision of ruling coalition partner Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) to call an emergency meeting on Monday to officially decide 'to quit' the Pushpa Kamal Dahal-led government.

[Three ex-IGPs guilty in Sudan scam: SC](#)

My Republica | 30th April

The Supreme Court has declared three former chiefs of Nepal Police guilty in the high-profile Sudan APC scam and sentenced them up to two years behind bars. Issuing its final verdict on Sunday, a division bench of Chief Justice Sushila Karki and Justice Bishwambhar Shrestha found former IGPs Om Bikram Rana, Hem Bahadur Gurung and Ramesh Chanda Thakuri, and several other Nepal Police officials guilty of corruption in the purchase of logistics for UN peacekeeping force deployed in Darfur, Sudan.

PAKISTAN

[Erdogan urges Pakistan, India to settle Kashmir dispute once and for all](#)

Express Tribune | 30th April

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has called for Pakistan and India settling the dispute of Kashmir once and for all through talks, Radio Pakistan reported on Sunday. In an interview ahead of his visit to India, he stressed the need for a negotiated settlement of the long-standing Kashmir issue. Erdogan said there was no similarity between the Kurdish insurgents and the Kashmiri freedom fighters.

[SBP borrows \\$3.93b to bolster forex reserves](#)

Express Tribune | 30th April

The central bank has borrowed a whopping \$3.93 billion mainly from commercial banks for up to three months to artificially sustain official foreign exchange reserves at \$16 billion level, which had started depleting due to a sudden spike in imports. The act of the central bank is in violation of the terms and conditions agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under the \$6.2 billion Extended Fund Facility three-and-a-half-year ago. However, the agreement had expired in September 2016 paving the way for the central bank to avail the loan.

[Pakistani among 46 arrested over 2016 Madina attack](#)

Express Tribune/ Reuters | 30th April

Saudi Arabia said on Sunday that it had arrested 46 members of a militant cell responsible for a deadly suicide bombing attack on Masjid-e-Nabawi in the holy city of Madina last summer that was blamed on Islamic State (IS). The suspects, which included foreign and Saudi citizens, were detained in the Western port city of Jeddah, state news agency SPA quoted the interior ministry as saying. Speaking to reporters in Riyadh, the interior minister stated 32 of those arrested were Saudis, while the 14 others were from Egypt, Pakistan, Yemen, Afghanistan, Sudan and Jordan, reported Associated Press.

[Govt looking to retract Leaks notification](#)

Express Tribune | 1st May

Reeling under pressure following the military's outright rejection of the notification issued by his office to 'punish' two government functionaries over the Dawn Leaks episode, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif consulted his aides in Lahore on Sunday to discuss options to defuse a burgeoning civil-military row. In this connection, the government is considering to either formally withdraw the contentious notification or to unofficially discard it and issue a separate 'comprehensive' notification through the interior ministry, sources privy to developments said.

SRI LANKA

[No bilateral agreements during Indian PM's visit to Sri Lanka, President clarifies](#)

Colombo Page| 29th April

Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena today clarified that the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not sign any agreement during his upcoming visit to Sri Lanka next month. Addressing the centenary celebrations at the Oddamavadi Central College in Batticaloa the President reiterated that the Indian Prime Minister is visiting Sri Lanka only to take part in the United Nations Vesak Day celebrations and will not involve in any other official functions.

[Korea EximBank signs aide memoire with ADB and Sri Lankan government to develop Colombo-Trincomalee Economic Corridor](#)

Colombo Page| 29th April

The Export-Import Bank of Korea (Korea Eximbank) signed an aide memoire with Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) on Wednesday, marking the launch of ADB-KSP Joint Consulting to support the GoSL in drawing a blueprint for the Colombo-Trincomalee Economic Corridor (CTEC).

[Suspected Rohingya Muslims detained by coast guard](#)

Colombo Gazette| 30th April

The coast guard detained 32 suspected Rohingya Muslims who fled India by boat, Navy Spokesman Lieutenant Commander Chandima Walakuluge said. He said the boat was detained in the Northern seas and was brought ashore to Kankesanthurai (KKS). Walakuluge told the Colombo Gazette that there were seven women and 16 children below the age of nine, including a 15 day old child and four month old child on the boat.

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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