

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

**April 21st, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 8/4**

[Pakistan looks for survivable second strike capability: former envoy](#)

Dawn | 20th April

Pakistan does not want to match the Indian nuclear arsenal, but will do all it can to keep its deterrence credible, says a nuclear expert. "We are not talking of parity, we are looking for proportionality, we are looking for survivable second strike capability," Pakistan's former ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva Zamir Akram said while speaking at a seminar organised by the Strategic Vision Institute (SVI) on 'South Asian Nuclear Doctrines: Deterrence Equilibrium and Strategic Stability'.

[MoD Rejects Taliban Claims of Killing Over 155 Thousand Soldiers](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ KP | 20th April

The Ministry of Defense (MoD) on Wednesday rejected the claims by the Taliban of killing more than 155 thousand soldiers in the past ten years. Dismissing the reports as baseless, the Ministry of Defense said the people of Afghanistan and everyone else accepts that the Taliban group and similarly other terrorist groups have committed countless atrocities in the history of humanity and Islam.

[First ever G15 global grouping session in Sri Lanka opens Monday](#)

Colombo Page | 20th April

The first ever direct partnering effort by Group of 15 (G15) global grouping with Sri Lanka will commence on Monday (24th April) in capital Colombo. Experts from the G15, the focused country group that works along with G77, which is the largest coalition of developing countries in UN will conduct their intense sessions in Colombo from 24th to 25th April, focusing on Intellectual Property (IP) rights of traditional knowledge.

## AFGHANISTAN

[You committed an immense atrocity against Afghans, Karzai tells Trump](#)

Khaama Press | 20th April

The former Afghan President Hamid Karzai has told Trump that he has committed an immense atrocity against the Afghan people. "My message to President Donald Trump today is that he has committed an immense atrocity against the Afghan people," He said in a Twitter post. Karzai further added that Trump has committed atrocity against the fellow Afghans, against fellow human beings as he was apparently gesturing towards the use of MOAB against ISIS in East of Afghanistan.

[Ghani inaugurated Kamal Khan dam phase-3 construction in Nimroz](#)

Khaama Press | 20th April

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani inaugurated the construction work of the third phase of Kamal Khan dam in western Nimroz province of Afghanistan. The Government Media and Information Center said President Ghani was accompanied by a delegation of high level officials as he arrived in Zaranj, the provincial capital of Nimroz for the inauguration of the dam. The source further added that President Ghani attended the ceremony for the inauguration of the construction work of Kamal Khan dam phase-3 organized in Chahar Burjak district.

[Govt. Working on Plan with Private Sector to Boost Investment](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Tolonews | 20th April The Afghan government is currently drafting a joint plan with the

private sector to rebuild the sector's trust in the country and to boost investment in Afghanistan, said Shafiq Atae, deputy head of Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI). "The plan will encourage the private sector, and provide financial support to them from government's side. These are the policies which will help us to boost partnership between government and the private sector in a proper manner," he told TOLONews on Wednesday.

## **BANGLADESH**

### ['Dhaka, Thimphu to work in power, water resources & connectivity'](#)

BSS/ Prothom Alo | 20<sup>th</sup> April

Bangladesh and Bhutan have reaffirmed to further consolidate bilateral ties and agreed to work bilaterally and sub-regionally to boost cooperation in the areas of power, water resources, and connectivity for mutual benefit. A joint statement issued after the three-day state visit of prime minister Sheikh Hasina to Bhutan said on Thursday that the two countries also agreed to continue to work together for greater peace, prosperity and development in the region and beyond. The 26-point statement said prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her Bhutanese counterpart Dshao Tshering Tobgay during their bilateral meeting emphasised the advantages of sub-regional cooperation in the areas of power, water resources, and connectivity for mutual benefit.

### [Indian Army chief to visit Bangladesh second time in a month](#)

bdnews24 | 20<sup>th</sup> April

Indian Army chief General Bipin Rawat is visiting Dhaka again from Apr 27 to 30, the Times of India reports. The second visit in a month would follow Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina trip to India from Apr 7 to 10 when both sides signed agreements to strengthen defence relations. India also offered a new \$500 million line of credit to Bangladesh for defence purchase based on, what Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, Dhaka's own priorities and needs.

### [Foreign Direct Investment from Singapore triples to \\$673 million in Bangladesh](#)

The Financial Express | 20<sup>th</sup> April

Singapore emerged as the top source of the foreign direct investment (FDI) for Bangladesh in the last calendar year. Latest statistics, revealed by the central bank, showed that net inflow of FDI from the East Asian city-state stood at \$673 million in 2016. The net inflow of FDI in 2015 was \$175.27 million. Thus, FDI from Singapore almost tripled in a single year.

### [World Bank to give Bangladesh \\$6 billion credit in three years](#)

bdnews24 | 21<sup>st</sup> April

The World Bank has pledged to extend \$6 billion in credit to Bangladesh over next three years. Finance Minister AMA Muhith disclosed it to bdnews24.com after meeting the global lender's Vice President for South Asia Region Annette Dixon at its headquarters in Washington DC on Thursday on the sidelines of the Spring Meeting of the World Bank Group - IMF. Muhith told bdnews24.com that Dixon said the World Bank would provide the money in three instalments of \$2 billion each in every fiscal year from 2017-18 to 2019-20.

## **BHUTAN**

### [A successful visit](#)

KUENSEL | 20<sup>th</sup> April

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's three-day visit in the country was a success, foreign minister Damcho Dorji said at a press conference yesterday. The Prime Minister unveiled the foundation stone plaque for the construction of the Bangladesh embassy at Hejo morning. His Majesty The King, Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay and other senior government officials were present at the ceremony.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Price of fuel, staple products to be reduced](#)

Sun Online | 20<sup>th</sup> April

State Trading Organization (STO) will be reducing the price of fuel and staple products it imports to Maldives starting April 23. The decision to cut subsidies on staple products in October, 2016 had been hugely unpopular.

STO had commented it was working on reducing the prices of the products. And Managing Director of STO in an interview with “Sun” this year had declared a “good change is imminent”.

#### [Ministry of Islamic Affairs: Mosques need to be respected whatever discontent, disagreement](#)

Sun Online | 20<sup>th</sup> April

Ministry of Islamic Affairs has appealed for mosques to be respected as they were sacred in the Islamic religion. The appeal comes after the wall of Islamic Center in Male’ City was defaced with a vulgar message on Wednesday night. Ministry of Islamic Affairs appealed for places regarded sacred in the Islamic religion be respected whatever the discontent or disagreement a person may have.

### **MYANMAR**

#### [Blue Shirt Campaign Demands Release of Political Prisoners](#)

The Irrawaddy | 20<sup>th</sup> April

Politicians and activists will wear blue shirts on Friday to commemorate renowned journalist and politician U Win Tin and all political prisoners still held in Burma’s jails. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) organized the campaign, to be held on the three-year anniversary of the death of National League for Democracy (NLD) co-founder and political prisoner U Win Tin. “The campaign is to remind the government that there are political prisoners who are still behind bars and to demand their release,” Ko Bo Kyi of AAPP told reporters, adding that they would not march for the occasion.

#### [Non-transparent contracts in Yangon Region to be reviewed](#)

Mizzima | 21<sup>st</sup> April

Yangon Region Legislative Assembly legislator Kyaw Zeya from Dagon constituency told Mizzima that the assembly would review and point out the non-transparency of contracts given through nepotism by citing an Auditor-General’s Report for Yangon Region.

### **NEPAL**

#### [Parliament meet postponed due to lack of quorum](#)

RSS / The Kathmandu Post | 20<sup>th</sup> April

A proposal tabled for consideration on ‘Bill on Electricity Regulation Commission, 2073’ could not pass on Thursday due to lack of quorum in the Legislature-Parliament. The bill tabled by Minister for Energy Janardan Sharma was expected to be passed with a majority of the lawmakers, but Speaker Onsari Ghartimagar directed the Parliament Secretariat to confirm the number of lawmakers after lawmaker Prem Suwal raised an objection towards lack of quorum.

#### [PM, Morcha meet underway](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 21<sup>st</sup> April

A meeting between leaders of the ruling coalition—Nepali Congress (NC) and CPN (Maoist Centre)— and Madhesi Morcha leaders to discuss on holding the local level elections in two phases and constitution amendment is underway at the PM’s residence in Baluwatar. The meeting called by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal is taking place a day after six out of Madhes-based parties affiliated with the Samyukta Loktanrik Madhesi Morcha (SLMM) unified to form Rastriya Janata Party. After the unification, the RJP has announced ‘to step up protest’ to press for statute revision.

### **PAKISTAN**

#### [Fata sees surge in terrorist attacks](#)

Dawn | 20<sup>th</sup> April

The incidence of terrorist attacks in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas has increased by 72 percent in the first quarter of 2017 compared to the last quarter of 2016, said a Fata Research Centre report issued here on Thursday. According to the report, a total of 69 terrorist incidents took place during the last quarter of 2016 i.e. from October to December, while 119 such incidents were recorded in the first quarter of 2017 i.e. from January to March. Of these incidents, 57 were terrorist attacks and 62 related to counter-terrorism actions conducted by law-enforcement agencies.

### [SC says it can't disqualify PM at this stage](#)

Dawn | 20th April

Justice Ejaz Afzal Khan in his main judgement in the Panama Papers leaks case regretted that the bulk of unauthenticated documents brought on record by Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf chief Imran Khan were pitched against another bulk of unauthenticated documents submitted by the sons of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. "We, therefore, have no hesitation to hold that a question of this nature in the absence of undisputed evidence cannot be decided by this court in exercise of its jurisdiction under Article 184(3) of the Constitution," Justice Khan explained.

### [Trade associations see stability](#)

Dawn | 20th April

The leaders of major trade associations heaved a sigh of relief at the Supreme Court's verdict. They said it cleared the clouds of uncertainty that was causing an adverse impact on business activities for the past few weeks. Talking to Dawn, most businessmen sounded happy over the outcome. A leader articulated the community's sentiment and said it was 'like a big storm passing away without causing devastation'.

## SRI LANKA

### [Sri Lanka President announces speedy solutions to SAIMT and garbage dump issues](#)

Colombo Page | 20th April

Sri Lanka President Maithripala Sirisena has addressed the two most burning issues in the country currently at a meeting with the media today. During the meeting with the editors and media heads at the President's House in Colombo on Thursday the President apprised the journalists regarding the current political and economic situation of the country and responded to their queries.

### [Ranil to discuss key issues during India visit next week](#)

Colombo Gazette | 20th April

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe will visit India next week to set the agenda for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trip to Colombo in May, The Hindu newspaper reported. "The visit of the PM of Sri Lanka to India from April 25 is part of our continuing engagement with the Government of Sri Lanka at the highest level," an MEA spokesperson said, announcing the visit.

### [MEPs demand Sri Lanka to respect labor rights before granting trade preference](#)

Colombo Page | 20th April

Sri Lanka must adhere to core conventions of the International Labor Organization and deliver on its promise of guaranteeing employee rights if the country looks to regain its preferential trade status, Members of European Parliament (MEPs) said.

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### ***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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