



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

**April 24th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 9/4**

[Bangladesh Govt to import power from Indian co at higher price](#)

The Financial Express | 23<sup>rd</sup> April  
The government is going to import electricity from an Indian company at higher price than that of local one, officials said. The 1600 MW coal-based power plant, owned by Adani Power Ltd located at Jharkhand in India, proposed supplying electricity to the power division at Tk 6.89016 per kilowatt hour (kWh). S. Alam Power Plant has proposed the rate at Tk 6.6045 per kWh.

[Afghan forces to take revenge of the attack on Shaheen Corps:](#)

Atmar  
Khaama Press | 23<sup>rd</sup> April  
The National Security Adviser Mohammad Hanif Atmar has said the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) personnel are committed to take revenge of the deadly attack on 209th Shaheen Corps base in Balkh province. Atmar made the remarks during a telephone conversation with the secretary of the National Security Council of Iran Ali Shamkhani. According to a statement by the Office of the National Security Adviser (NSA), the Iranian National Security Council secretary made a telephone call to Mr. Atmar following the deadly attack on army base in northern Balkh province.

[Pakistan cajoles Iran to join Saudi alliance](#)

Express Tribune | 24th April  
Although it has the potential to derail Pakistan's relationship with its key Muslim neighbor and have far-reaching strategic and domestic implications, the country's civil and military authorities decided to join the Saudi-led military alliance with the hope that it may foster unity in the Islamic world. Towards this end, Pakistan has launched a diplomatic initiative to convince Iran to join the 41-nation coalition and bring about a rapprochement between Tehran and Riyadh.

**AFGHANISTAN**

[Balkh Attack: Sunday Declared National Day of Mourning](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Pajhwok | 23<sup>rd</sup> April  
The Afghan government on Saturday declared Sunday (April 23) a national day of mourning following a deadliest attack on the military in northern Balkh province. The Friday's attack involving gunmen and suicide bombers left at least 140 troops with the Shaheen Military Corps dead and several others wounded. The troops were offering Friday prayers when they were attacked in the mosque in their base. A statement from the President's media office said Sunday had been declared a national day of mourning in compliance with directives from President Ashraf Ghani. The Afghanistan flag would fly half-mast on government offices and foreign missions to pay respect to the martyred soldiers.

[Helmand elders, clerics demand foreign troops' withdrawal](#)

Afghanistan Times | 23<sup>rd</sup> April  
Tens of clerics and elders in the southern province of Helmand demanded the withdrawal of the foreign soldiers from Afghanistan. They believe that the foreign forces prolong the war in Afghanistan and the war would continue

unless the foreign countries pull their troops back. They are concerned if Afghanistan turns into a field for regional and world battles, saying aerial attack on Achin was a good example.

### [Trump's Afghan Policy Likely by Mid-May: Khalilzad](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Pajhwok | 24th April

The Trump administration may finalise its policy on Afghanistan ahead of next month's G-7 summit in Italy, a former US ambassador says. Zalmay Khalilzad, who served as US ambassador to Afghanistan, said in an interview on Sunday that the Trump team was expected to conclude negotiations on the Afghan policy by mid-May. President Donald Trump will attend the meeting of the seven leading industrialised economies in Taormina, Sicily, next month.

## **BANGLADESH**

### [Bangladesh to introduce rota virus, HPV vaccines in 2018](#)

bdnews24 | 23<sup>rd</sup> April

Bangladesh plans to add two new vaccines to its routine immunisation programme in 2018, the director general for health services has said. Prof Abul Kalam Azad said they would introduce rota virus vaccine to prevent a common childhood diarrhoea and human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine to prevent cervical cancer. "We have already planned to roll out those vaccines," he said at a press briefing on Sunday ahead of World Immunisation Week from Apr 24 to Apr 30. The week is being celebrated across the world to raise awareness of immunisation. This year it is themed on "Vaccines work to save lives".

### [3.3 lakh poor to get relief](#)

The Daily Star | 24<sup>th</sup> April

The Bangladesh Government has taken a 100-day scheme to distribute relief among at least 3.3 lakh ultra-poor families affected by the flash flood in haor areas. As part of the scheme, each family in six districts will receive 30kg of rice and Tk 500 per month, Disaster Management and Relief Minister Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya said after an inter-ministerial meeting with secretaries of all relevant ministries.

### [IFC to invest \\$2bn in Bangladesh in next 2yrs](#)

The Daily Star | 24<sup>th</sup> April

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a sister concern of the World Bank, will invest US\$2 billion in Bangladesh in next two years, said Finance Minister AMA Muhith. Emerging from a meeting with IFC Chief Executive Officer Philippe Le Houerou, Minister Muhith informed this to reporters at Washington yesterday, reports our staff correspondent. The organisation is planning to invest \$600 million in Bangladesh this year, the minister said adding that it is also planning to invest in Bangladesh's agriculture and power sectors.

## **BHUTAN**

### [Govt. drops BBIN agreement](#)

Kuensel | 22<sup>nd</sup> April

The government yesterday withdrew the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicle Agreement from the agenda for the upcoming Parliament session. The decision to withdraw the agreement was announced at the preliminary agenda setting session of the National Assembly after the joint parliamentary committee met on April 20 to discuss the agreement.

## **MALDIVES**

### [Blogger Yamin dies from stab wounds](#)

Sun Online | 23<sup>rd</sup> April

Social media activist and blogger, Yamin Rasheed, 29, was murdered in the pre-dawn hours of this Sunday. Police reported a 29-year-old man was found with stab wounds at 2:59 am from the stairwell of a house located near Bisburu in Male' City. And that the man succumbed to his injuries shortly after being taken to the hospital. "Sun" has been informed the victim is social media activist and blogger, Yamin Rasheed from Chanbeyleege in Feydhoo, Addu City.

### [High Court upholds Adeeb's sentence over weapons possession](#)

Sun Online | 24<sup>th</sup> April

High Court has made the decision to uphold former Vice President and Minister of Tourism Ahmed Adeb Abdull Gafoor's 10-year prison sentence for weapons possession.

## MYANMAR

### [Burmese Military Delegation Continues European Goodwill Visit](#)

The Irrawaddy | 24th April

A delegation led by Burma military chief Snr-Gen Min Aung Hlaing arrived in Austria to meet with the Chief of Defense Staff of Austrian Armed Forces as part of the delegation's European trip to Germany at the invitation of Chief of Defense of the German Armed Forces General Volker Weiker. The Burmese military stated that the purpose of this trip was a goodwill visit.

### [State-level political dialogue begins in Shan State](#)

Mizzima | 24th April

Shan State started a three-day State-level political dialogue in Taunggyi, a meeting described as a milestone and a significant step taken by the people toward peace in the Union, state media reported on 24 April. According to the Shan State Chief Minister, Dr Lin Htut, representatives from the self-administered regions and zones submitted a total of 70 papers – 26 political papers, 23 papers on the economy and 21 papers on land issues, natural resources and environmental conservation.

## NEPAL

### [President Bhandari enacts two bills](#)

The Himalayan Times | 23<sup>rd</sup> April

President Bidya Devi Bhandari on Sunday has certified two bills endorsed by the Legislature-Parliament on various dates. The enactment was in accordance with the Article 113.2 of the Constitution, according to a statement issued by the President's Office.

### [Govt confirms June 14 as Phase II polling day](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 24<sup>th</sup> April

The government on Sunday decided to hold the second phase of local level elections on June 14 after consulting with the Election Commission and approved contents of the proposed constitutional amendments. As the preparations for the first round of election are going on in full swing, the government also decided, citing time limits, to request the EC to defer the April 29 deadline for candidate nomination by some days in provinces 3, 4 and 6, where the vote will be held in the first phase. The polls in provinces 1, 2, 5 and 7 will take place on June 14.

### [DIG Nawaraj Silwal taken in police custody](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 24<sup>th</sup> April

A police team deployed from the Nepal Police headquarters on Monday has taken Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Nawaraj Silwal in custody. SSP Sarbendra Khanal, spokesperson of the Nepal Police, said that DIG Silwal was apprehended for investigation into the case in which he was accused of forging performance evaluation form.

## PAKISTAN

### [Pakistan way off track on Millennium Development Goals](#)

Express Tribune | 24th April

Despite spending Rs4.06 trillion since 2012-13, Pakistan has failed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in health, education, social welfare and other areas, as progress on 24 indicators was way off track with only four appearing achievable. Documents and statistics of the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms and the Ministry of Finance portray a depressed picture of the country, as it failed to achieve most of the goals despite spending trillions of rupees by the incumbent government and its predecessor.

### [Local, global security firms in race along China's 'Silk Road'](#)

Express Tribune | 24th April

Global security companies and their smaller Chinese rivals are jostling for business along Beijing's modern-day "Silk Road", the grandiose plan for land and sea routes connecting the world's second largest economy with the rest of Asia and beyond. Representing investments of hundreds of billions of dollars, the pet project of Chinese

President Xi Jinping is seen boosting economic growth at home, and as positive for everything from steel prices to cement makers.

#### [Opposition parties form alliance 'to oust PM'](#)

Express Tribune | 24th April

The opposition parties – Pakistan Muslim League (PML), Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), Majlis Wahdatul Muslimeen (MWM) and Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) – have teamed up to constitute a grand alliance on the Panama issue and pressure Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to step down. Leaders of the four-party alliance met on Sunday and gave approval to form a grand alliance on the Panama issue under the leadership of PML President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain.

#### [Tax breaks for Chinese won't hit economy: govt](#)

Dawn | 24th April

Chinese investors in the \$56 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are enjoying all sorts of tax breaks from customs, income, sales, federal excise and withholding taxes. But despite all the tax discounts and exemptions, which amount to around Rs150 billion in lost revenue, the government is claiming there will be no adverse impact on local industries and domestic investors. In a written reply submitted to the National Assembly last week, the finance ministry explained the series of tax exemptions or discounts offered to Chinese investors, which have been notified through statutory regulatory orders (SRO).

### **SRI LANKA**

#### [EU parliamentary group tables resolution against granting GSP+ to Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page | 22<sup>nd</sup> April

An European Parliamentary group has tabled a resolution in the European Parliament against granting the Generalized System of Preferences plus (GSP+) tariff concession to Sri Lanka saying that Sri Lanka's government's reform efforts are not adequate to grant the tariff concession.

#### [World Bank, IMF assures support for Sri Lanka's fiscal policy reforms, development](#)

Colombo Page | 22<sup>nd</sup> April

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have commended the progress of Sri Lanka's economic development process and assured support for the island nation's fiscal policy reforms and economic growth.

#### [Bahrain looks to make use of Sri Lankan skilled workforce](#)

Colombo Gazette | 24<sup>th</sup> April

Bahrain is keen to make use of the Sri Lankan skilled workforce, the Bahrain News Agency reported. The Deputy Premier of Bahrain, Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al-Khalifa received the Sri Lankan Ambassador to Bahrain Dr. A. Saj U. Mendis and reviewed the possibility of benefiting from the Sri Lankan skilled workforce in the hospitality sector.

#### [Surge in foreign capital inflows boosts Colombo Stock Exchange](#)

Colombo Page | 24<sup>th</sup> April

The Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) in recent weeks has garnered a keen interest among foreign institutional investors, with a surge in foreign activity contributing to a strong showing in both daily turnover levels and the performance of the stock market indices.

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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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