

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

April 28th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 11/4

[Taliban launches spring offensive, vows to carry out more attacks](#)

Khaama Press | 28th April

The Taliban militants group in Afghanistan announced the launch of their new spring offensive under the name of Mansoori, vowing to carry out more attacks across the country. The group says the operation has been named after their former leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, claiming that they had major achievements on the political and military level under his leadership.

[PM in hot water over 'secret' meeting with Indian tycoon](#)

Express Tribune | 28th April

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif found himself caught in another storm on Thursday, this time over a furtive huddle with an Indian steel magnate which is being labelled as back-channel diplomacy. An Indian delegation led by Sajjan Jindal – a close friend of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi – met Premier Nawaz at his private residence in Murree on Wednesday, away from the media glare.

[European parliament votes in favor of granting GSP+ to Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page | 27th April

The European Parliament Thursday has voted to defeat a resolution tabled to deny granting the European Union's Generalized Scheme of Preferences, Plus known as GSP+ tariff concession to Sri Lanka again. Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Harsha de Silva said that Sri Lanka won the vote in Brussels after 436 MEPs voted against, 119 voted in favor and 22 abstained for the motion to deny GSP plus for Sri Lanka.

AFGHANISTAN

[Graft in Afghan Security Sector Impedes Peace: EU](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Pajhwok | 27th April

Despite a focused effort to fight corruption in the security forces, new reports surface frequently about fraud or nepotism in the ranks of the army and police, the European Union (EU) said on Wednesday. Often driven from the top, corruption hampered the effectiveness of the security forces, allowing the Taliban to draw strength on the battlefields, it said, claiming weapons and other supplies had been sold off to the insurgents.

[Afghan, Iraq Troops a 'Long-Term' Pledge: Turnbull](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ 9news | 27th April

Australian soldiers will remain in Iraq and Afghanistan for a long time, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has said during a secret visit to the Middle East. Mr Turnbull's unannounced visit to troops was made in the lead-up to Anzac Day on Tuesday. "There is no doubt that in both theatres, there is going to need to be a long-term commitment," he told reporters in the United Arab Emirates. "So it is going to be a long-term commitment and we will consider, with our allies in these conflict areas, requests for further support and as it evolves, we'll be looking at that." More than 1700 Australian Defence Force personnel are deployed in the Middle East, with about 750 in Iraq and Syria and 270 in Afghanistan.

[ISIS leaders among 8 killed in Afghan forces operations in Nangarhar](#)

Khaama Press | 28th April

At least eight militants of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria Khurasan (ISIS-K) were killed during the operations of the Afghan security forces in eastern Nangarhar province. The provincial police commandment said the operations were conducted in the past 24 hours with the support of the Air Force. The militants were targeted in the vicinity of Pekha area of Achin district which is home to ISIS-K militants.

BANGLADESH

[Brexit will not harm ties with Bangladesh: David Cameron to Sheikh Hasina](#)

bdnews24 | 27th April

Britain's exit from the European Union will not harm its ties with Bangladesh, David Cameron has said. He made the comment during his meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her office on Thursday morning. The former UK PM, who had proposed the referendum that altered Britain's relationship with the EU, arrived in Dhaka for a private visit on Wednesday.

[Bangladesh gets 37 ships for scrap in Q1 of 2017](#)

The Financial Express | 27th April

A total of 37 ships were sold for scrap to Chittagong breaking yards in the first quarter of 2017. In total 128 ships were sold to the South Asian beaches including Bangladesh during the period, according to a report published in www.hellenicshippingnews.com. The Alang beach in India was by far the most popular destination for end-of-life ships this quarter, with 69 ships sold for breaking. This quarter 22 ships were sold for breaking in Pakistan.

[Workplace deaths double in 2016](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 28th April

699 died and 703 were injured in the workplace last year. Bangladesh has experienced 1,402 casualties in the workplace last year, a report of the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) says. The report, scheduled to be released on April 30, says the number of the casualties almost doubled from 2015. In 2016, 699 workers died in the workplace and 703 people were injured. In 2015, the number of deaths was 745, in 2014 it was 1,288 and in 2013 it was 7,650, including the victims of the Rana Plaza building collapse.

[ADB, City Bank sign \\$5m trade finance deal](#)

The Financial Express | 27th April

Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the City Bank Limited Thursday signed a loan agreement of US\$5 million to support import and export financing for Bangladeshi businesses. Under the agreement, ADB's Trade Finance Program (TFP) will provide trade loans to the City Bank to on-lend to local firms, said a press release. "We are pleased to be growing the partnership with the City Bank and to support more trade, which is directly linked to job creation and economic growth," said Edward Faber, TFP Relationship Manager for Bangladesh, on the occasion of signing the agreement at ADB's Bangladesh Resident Mission in Dhaka.

MALDIVES

[President requests opposition leaders to send letters to free Nasheed](#)

Sun Online | 27th April

President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom has requested that opposition leaders send in letters individually if they want to free the former President Mohamed Nasheed, who is currently in self-exile after being sentenced to 13 years in prison. Speaking at the membership acceptance ceremony for 400 new members joining the ruling party PPM, President Yameen said that he no longer has the power to free the ex-President Nasheed and it can only be done by changing the laws.

MYANMAR

[Controversial Bridge Opened to Public Under the Name of Gen Aung San](#)

The Irrawaddy | 27th April

The controversial bridge across the Salween River linking Moulmein and Chaungzon townships in Mon State was put into service on Thursday, under the contested name "Gen Aung San Bridge (Belu Island)." Mon State Chief Minister Dr. Aye Zan confirmed the opening of the bridge to the public.

[Malaysia PM Warns Uneven Growth Could Fuel Extremism, Instability in SE Asia](#)

Reuters / The Irrawaddy | 28th April

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak on Friday warned that Southeast Asian countries needed to ensure their economic growth was inclusive, or risk marginalized populations turning to violent extremism or even overturning political systems. Speaking at an event for entrepreneurs during the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit in Manila, Najib said the region was posting strong growth that could see ASEAN become the world's fourth-largest economy, but that growth needed to be equitable.

NEPAL

[DPM Mahara to represent Nepal in OBOR meeting](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 28th April

The government has confirmed Nepal's participation in the One Belt One Road conference in Beijing next month. Officials are continuing efforts to sign an agreement with China during the conference for Nepal to become a part of OBOR, a flagship foreign policy initiative of Chinese President Xi Jinping. Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara will lead the Nepali delegation to the conference. Two other ministers--Physical Infrastructure Minister Ramesh Lekhak and Communications Minister Surendra Karki--are in the delegation joined by other senior government officials.

[PAC asks govt for TSC report](#)

The Himalayan Times | 28th April

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Legislature-Parliament, today, asked the Ministry of Finance (MoF) to furnish the report of the Tax Settlement Commission (TSC), 2071, to the committee within 15 days. Citing that the TSC has exempted huge taxes for different businesses in the name of tax settlement, the committee sought the TSC report from MoF within two weeks. The TSC report is considered a confidential government document.

[Bhutan backs out of BBIN 'for now', report Indian Media](#)

My Republica | 28th April

Indian media on Thursday reported that Bhutan has backed out of the BBIN (Bhutan-Bangladesh-India-Nepal) motor vehicles pact 'for now' and quoted Indian officials and sources that their government will consider alternative options which will involve only Bangladesh and Nepal.

PAKISTAN

[Defamation suit against Imran on the cards](#)

Express Tribune | 28th April

The much-awaited response to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan's incendiary allegations that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif tried to bribe him to look the other way in the Panama Papers case came on Thursday with the latter's legal team advising to file a defamation suit. The government is considering filing a defamation case against the PTI chief on his incendiary allegations that the Sharif family had offered him Rs10 billion to back off from the Panamagate case.

[April 13 US bombing killed 13 RAW agents in Afghanistan: FO](#)

Express Tribune | 27th April

Pakistan claimed on Thursday that at least 13 Indian spies were also among those killed in a massive US bomb blast targeting Islamic State's regional affiliate in Afghanistan. On April 13, the Pentagon announced that the US military dropped the 'Mother of All Bombs (MOAB)' – the largest non-nuclear weapon ever used in combat – on a 'cave-tunnel complex' used by IS, commonly known by its Arabic acronym Da'ish, in the eastern Afghan province of Nangarhar. Afghan officials the 20,000-pound bomb, which struck in the Achin district of Nangarhar – close to the border with Pakistan – killed 94 militants and that there were no civilian casualties.

[Pakistan refuses ADB loan for railway as China becomes sole financier](#)

Dawn | 28th April

Pakistan has refused part financing from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the \$8 billion Karachi-Peshawar Railway Line (ML-1) after China said it wanted to fund the project single-handedly. "China strongly argued that two-sourced financing would create problems and the project would suffer," Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal told a news conference on Thursday.

SRI LANKA

[Sri Lankan President invites Malaysian investors to explore investment opportunities in Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page | 27th April

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena today invited leading Malaysian entrepreneurs to explore possibilities of expanding investment and trade and look for the potential of new trade opportunities in Sri Lanka.

[CBK calls for unity between Sinhalese, Tamil kids](#)

Colombo Gazette | 27th April

Former President Chandrika Kumaratunga today noted that there needs to be unity between Sinhalese and Tamil children. Speaking at an event today, Kumaratunga said that while the war was won peace was not achieved. She said that simply winning the war does not ensure peace and for there to be real peace the cause of the conflict must be addressed.

[India Lanka to hold talks on ISIS threat in South Asia](#)

Colombo Gazette | 27th April

India and Sri Lanka will hold a dialogue on how to check the growing threat of the Islamic State in South Asia and any attempt by the terror outfit to destabilise the region, the Press Trust of India reported. The issue was discussed when India's Home Minister Rajnath Singh called on visiting Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe in New Delhi. The Home Minister welcomed the Sri Lankan prime minister and emphasised on the close political ties between the two countries.

About Ananta Aspen Centre

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