

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

**April 7th, 2017 | Volume: 3 - 3/4**

[Durand is a redline for Afghanistan: Afghan govt is ready to defend the country sovereignty, if Pak continue violation along Durand line](#)

Afghanistan Times | 6<sup>th</sup> April  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday condemned Pakistan violations along de-facto Durand Line as a 'unilateral and illogical move. It said that security and defense forces of Afghanistan are ready to defend the country's sovereignty, if Pakistan action continue along de-facto Durand line. " if Pakistan violation continue along the de-facto Durand line, the government of Afghanistan and security forces are ready to defend the country's integrity and national sovereignty," Said Spokesman of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ahmad ShekibMustaghni. He said that the government of Afghanistan will refer the issue to the nation and do whatever the Afghan nation prefer.

[Defence cooperation to be one of key outcomes of Hasina's tour: India](#)

UNB/ Prothom Alo | 6<sup>th</sup> April  
Defence cooperation between Bangladesh and India will certainly be one of the outcomes of prime minister Sheikh Hasina's India visit while Bangladesh will need to wait a bit with "some patience" on the much-awaited Teesta water sharing deal. "Certainly, defence cooperation would be one of the outcomes of the visit," Indian foreign secretary Subrahmanyam Jaishankar told a visiting Bangladesh media delegation at the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi on Thursday evening.

[Pakistan ready for talks with India on terrorism: Foreign Office](#)

Dawn | 7<sup>th</sup> April  
The Foreign Office said on Thursday that Pakistan was ready for dialogue with India on terrorism and would like to discuss Indian role in subversive activities in Pakistani territory. "India wants to speak of terrorism! We also insist on speaking of terrorism ... We need to address Indian-sponsored terrorism in Pakistan," FO spokesman Nafees Zakaria said at the weekly media briefing. He was commenting on the Indian reaction to a statement by US Ambassador to UN Nikki Haley in which she had indicated US interest in mediating between India and Pakistan to prevent the tensions between the South Asian rivals from escalating.

**AFGHANISTAN**

[25 militants killed, vehicle packed with explosives destroyed in Uruzgan airstrike](#)

Khaama Press | 6<sup>th</sup> April

At least twenty insurgents were killed and a vehicle packed with explosives was destroyed in an airstrike conducted in southern Uruzgan province of Afghanistan. The Ministry of Defense (MoD) said the airstrike was conducted in the vicinity of Tarinkot city, the provincial capital of Uruzgan province. Uruzgan is among the relatively volatile provinces in southern Afghanistan where the Taliban insurgents and militants belonging to the other insurgent groups are actively operating in its various districts.

[NATO pledges \\$2.7 million for Kabul military hospital reconstruction](#)

Khaama Press | 6<sup>th</sup> April

The NATO-led Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan has pledged \$2.7 million for the main military hospital in

Kabul which has witnessed a deadly attack last month. A spokesman for the Resolute Mission Capt Bill Salvin told reporters in Kabul today that the repair work of Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan hospital has been completed by 90 per cent after the attack by the insurgents. He said the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission is budgeted \$2.7 million which will include \$1.7 million for new medical equipment and \$1 million for new furnishings.

#### [Trump and Merkel pledge close cooperation on Afghanistan and Ukraine](#)

Khaama Press|6<sup>th</sup> April

The US President Donald Trump and the German Chancellor Angela Merkel have pledged close cooperation on conflict in Ukraine and the situation in Afghanistan. The White House in a statement said “President Donald J. Trump spoke today by telephone with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany.” The statement further added that the leaders discussed several issues of mutual concern and interest, including the conflict in eastern Ukraine and the situation in Afghanistan. The leaders pledged close cooperation and coordination on these and other issues,” the statement said, adding that “They agreed to remain in close contact.”

#### [Key Topic at next OIC Meeting in Saudi to be on Afghan War](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Tolonews|6<sup>th</sup> April  
The Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah’s office on Wednesday said Afghanistan is ready for the next Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting that will be held in Saudi Arabia to discuss Afghanistan’s war. The CEO’s office also said that focus will be paid to the issue that the war should not be fought under the name of Islam. The CEO’s deputy spokesman Jawed Faisal said all preparations have been made for the conference where religious scholars are expected to issue a fatwa against the ongoing war.

#### [Terror & Extremism have no Link to Islam: IIUI President](#)

Outlook Afghanistan/ Pajhwok|6<sup>th</sup> April

Officials of the International Islamic University in Islamabad (IIUI) say the twin scourge of terrorism and extremism has no link to Islam, a religion that sets great store by peace and brotherhood. During a meeting with a delegation of Afghan journalists currently visiting Pakistan, IIUI President Prof. Dr. Ahmed Yousif Ahmed Al Draiweesh said terrorism had no religion. In addition to Afghanistan and Pakistan, terrorist attacks were happening in Saudi Arabia too, he added.

#### [Afghan Taliban are strategic asset of Pakistan](#)

Afghanistan Times |6<sup>th</sup> April

The former US special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Olson has said that Pakistan still allows Afghan Taliban to use its soil as its ‘core strategic asset’ and is unlikely to abandon the terrorist groups as its Afghan policy is about “geo-strategic maneuvering” against India and following strategic depth in Afghanistan. Olson has said that he was convinced that Pakistan would not shun the safe sanctuaries for Afghan Taliban, roaming freely there and using its territory against Afghanistan.

### **BANGLADESH**

#### [New Delhi sees opportunities in Sheikh Hasina’s visit, no Teesta surprise on the horizon](#)

bdnews24 | 6<sup>th</sup> April

New Delhi sees Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s visit as an “opportunity” to raise Bangladesh-India relations to a new level, though there is no indication so far of the Teesta water sharing issue getting resolved during the Bangladesh leader’s state visit beginning on Friday. “I don’t want to mislead you. My honest assessment is that I don’t have anything right now which makes me believe that something dramatic will happen in the next two days,” Indian Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar said during his interaction with a group of Bangladesh journalists on Thursday.

#### [India's financial aid to Banglades, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka dips](#)

The Financial Express | 6<sup>th</sup> April

India's development assistance to war-ravaged Afghanistan has seen a reduction of nearly Rs 6.60 billion in 2016-17 compared to the year-ago period while its financial grant to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were also slashed significantly. According to data presented to the Lok Sabha by Minister of State External Affairs V K Singh, India

provided development aid of Rs 2.21 billion to Afghanistan between April 1, 2016 and March 27, 2017 as against Rs 8.80 billion in 2015-16 and Rs 7.23 billion in 2014-15.

#### [Bangladesh, Myanmar agrees to remove land mines from border](#)

The Financial Express | 6<sup>th</sup> April

Bangladesh and Myanmar agreed to remove improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and land mines along the border of the two countries, said BGB's Additional Director General Anisur Rahman to reporters. "After detailed discussions, we've agreed to take necessary steps for removing improvised explosive devices and land mines from the border areas for smooth border management, including carrying out patrol", he said.

#### [Bangladesh economy to grow by 6.9pc FY 2017, 2018, says ADB report](#)

The Financial Express | 6<sup>th</sup> April

Bangladesh's economy recorded a robust growth in FY2016 on the back of higher private sector investment and exports despite declining remittance inflow, says the Asian Development Bank (ADB). In its annual publication the 'Asian Development Outlook 2017', the global lender projects Bangladesh to grow by a moderate 6.9 per cent in FY 2017 and expects it to remain unchanged in the next fiscal, reports bdnews24.com.

#### [India offers support to develop rly network](#)

The Financial Express | 5<sup>th</sup> April

Indian Minister of Railways Suresh Prabhu has said that his country is ready to help Bangladesh in a greater way to modernise its railway network and expand it accordingly if it benefits Bangladesh, reports UNB. "We don't want to do anything which doesn't benefit Bangladesh, too. Both sides must benefit from any such cooperation," Suresh Prabhu was quoted by the news agency as saying while talking to a visiting Bangladesh media delegation at Rail Bhaban in New Delhi on Wednesday.

### **BHUTAN**

#### [Education ministry takes action against Tendu school authority](#)

Kuenselonline | 6<sup>th</sup> April

The Tendu Central School principal is being transferred following the reinvestigation confirming allegations of alcohol use during a party held in the school's multi-purpose hall in March. Though the education ministry is yet to decide on the transfer, Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay who visited the central school posted on his Twitter and Facebook pages on April 1 that the principal is being transferred following the reinvestigation. Lyonchoen Tshering Tobgay announced the decision during his visit to the school.

### **MALDIVES**

#### [Two former presidents calls for Qasim's release](#)

Sun Online | 7<sup>th</sup> April

Two former Presidents of the Maldives, Mohamed Nasheed and his predecessor, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom has called for the release of the Leader of Jumhooree Party and MP for Maamiligi constituency, Qasim Ibrahim, who was arrested earlier tonight. JP Leader, Qasim Ibrahim was arrested tonight at his residence, Maafannuvilla, with a court order. He has now been taken to the investigation jail in Dhoonidhoo.

#### [Jumhooree Party threatens to overthrow the government within the law](#)

Sun Online | 6<sup>th</sup> April

Jumhooree Party has said that the current government is not ruling within the Constitution and if it continues, the government will be overthrown within the law. In an interview on VTV following the arrest of the JP Leader, Qasim Ibrahim, the Secretary General of JP, Ahmed Sameer criticized the current government and President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom. Sameer said that President Yameen has been influencing the independent institutes and the law enforcement agencies of the state and the Jumhooree Party condemns such actions.

## MYANMAR

### [China's trans-Myanmar pipeline to start pumping oil in May](#)

Mizzima | 7<sup>th</sup> April

A pipeline pumping crude oil from Myanmar's Rakhine coastline into Yunnan Province in China will finally be operational in May after several delays, according to the Thura Swiss market research company based in Yangon. An official from investors Southeast Asia Crude Oil Pipeline (SEAOP) was cited in local and Chinese media reports this week saying that the pipeline is ready for operation, and that commencement is awaiting "instructions from higher ups."

### [Economic ties, border issues on agenda in Beijing for President Htin Kyaw](#)

Global Times / Mizzima | 7<sup>th</sup> April

Economic cooperation and border management will be high on the Myanmar president's agenda as he makes his first visit to China amid an economic slowdown at home and increased fighting with armed ethnic groups, Chinese analysts said. Myanmar President U Htin Kyaw left Naypyitaw for Beijing on Thursday for a six-day visit to China. The visit is aimed at enhancing mutual understanding and promoting friendly relations and cooperation between Myanmar and China, according to the Xinhua News Agency.

## NEPAL

### [Third EPG meeting: Indian side positive on Nepal's proposal to revise peace treaty](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 6<sup>th</sup> April

The two-day meeting of the Eminent Persons Group on Nepal-India Relations (EPG-NIR) that started from Wednesday in the Capital ended today with both sides agreeing to undergo further study and discussion on the 1950 Peace and Friendship Treaty. This is the third EPG meeting between Nepal and India.

### [DPM Nidhi in mood to step down; calls emergency meet with NC ministers](#)

My Republica | 6<sup>th</sup> April

Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and Minister for Home Affairs Bimalendra Nidhi has called an emergency meeting with the ministers in the government representing the Nepali Congress.

### [Banks' credit growth outpaces deposits](#)

The Himalayan Times | 6<sup>th</sup> April

Banks do not seem to be making any effort to collect deposits after Nepal Rastra Bank relaxed the rules on counting credit to core capital cum deposit ratio through the review of Monetary Policy around a month ago.

## PAKISTAN

### [Germany announces €109 million for Pakistan](#)

Express Tribune | 7<sup>th</sup> April

Germany announced a financial package of €109 million for Pakistan in order to develop economic ties between the two countries. The Declaration of Intent, which was signed following a meeting between Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Dr Gerd Muller on Thursday, promises €109 million to Pakistan in the next two years.

### [Afghanistan takes up Pakistan's border fencing with UN](#)

Express Tribune | 7<sup>th</sup> April

Afghanistan has complained to the UN Security Council about Pakistan's 'violations' along the border, the Afghan Foreign Ministry has said. Spokesman Ahmad Shakeeb Mustaghni told a news conference in Kabul that his government has shared 'evidence' with the United Nations about Pakistan's activities on the border and asked it to take a decision. He argued that Pakistan "cannot fence the border without Afghanistan's consent" and any unilateral action would be a 'violation' of international laws. On its part, Pakistan insists that fencing and other measures are aimed at checking cross-border movement of militants, blamed for violence in both the countries.

Last week, Army chief General QamarJaved Bajwa had announced that fencing has started in Bajaur and Mohmand tribal regions.

### [Sindh lends 23,000 cusecs water to Balochistan](#)

Express Tribune | 7<sup>th</sup> April

Despite having differences over share of water, Sindh – for the first time in the history of Pakistan – has lent 23,000 cusecs of water from its share to Balochistan to avoid an expected shortfall of drinking water in the province. On the other hand, the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) has increased – with an immediate effect – water share of Sindh from 40,000 cusecs to 45,000 cusecs as per its demand submitted on Thursday.

### [Changes in White House to increase pressure on Pakistan: experts](#)

Dawn | 7<sup>th</sup> April

This week's shake-up in the Trump White House could also lead to greater pressure on Pakistan to create a condition that allows the United States to win the war in Afghanistan, US experts say. The experts, who spoke to Dawn, said that there's still no talk in the US capital of severing ties with this key nation. But the new South Asian desk in the White House National Security will now be headed by a person who wants Pakistan to align its policies on terrorism and Afghanistan with those of the United States.

## **SRI LANKA**

### [European Union pledges Euro 42 million to Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Gazette | 6<sup>th</sup> April

The European Union (EU) will step up its assistance to Sri Lanka, by providing Euro 42 million (approximately LKR 6.93 billion) for the implementation of two programmes: Support to the Modernisation of the Agricultural Sector in Sri Lanka (EUR 30 million) and Strengthening Reconciliation Processes in Sri Lanka (EUR 12 million). Secretary to the Ministry of Finance, Dr. R. H. S. Samaratunge signed the agreements on behalf of the Government in the presence of Ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives for the Delegation of the European Union, H.E. Tung Lai Margue.

### [Sri Lanka's President underscores the need for a more efficient and systematic tax system for strong national economy](#)

Colombo Page | 6<sup>th</sup> April

Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena says the current methods of tax collections should be more efficient and systematic for the development of a strong national economy. Addressing the 16th Annual General Meeting of the Inland Revenue Commissioners' Association held at the Kingsbury Hotel, the President said there are many discrepancies in the taxation process as some institutions both state and private sector fail to pay taxes in due procedure.

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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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