

**Defense: Reports government requested foreign military assistance are false**

Sun Online | 11th February

Reports the Maldivian government has requested foreign states for military assistance is false, says Ministry of Defense. In a statement this Sunday, Ministry of Defense said media reports the Maldivian government has asked for military assistance from foreign states is false. The ministry said it was “concerned” over the reports. The Ministry of Defense stated that “the government has never asked for military assistance from any foreign state over the current situation.” The ministry appealed to the people to respect the sovereignty of the country, and to protect the legitimate government. It also appealed to the people to believe Maldivians had the capability of solving internal conflicts on their own.

**First Uzbek-Afghan Joint Security Commission Held**

Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 12th February

The first meeting of the Uzbek-Afghan joint commission on security issues was held in Tashkent. The agreement on establishment of the Uzbek-Afghan joint commission on security issues was reached during the official visit of the President of Afghanistan, Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, to Uzbekistan on December 4-6, 2017. The Commission is composed of representatives of the security Council office, security and law enforcement agencies of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. During the meeting, the state and prospects of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan in the fight against terrorism and extremism, issues of combating the arms trade and drug trafficking, the legalization of criminal proceeds and other forms of transnational

**Millions of dollars exchanged in Maldives ‘coup attempt’**

Maldives Independent | 12th February

Bribes of more than US\$2.7million were exchanged as part of a plot to overthrow the government of President Abdulla Yameen, Maldives police have alleged. Police spokesman Ahmed Shifan told reporters Sunday night that US\$260,000 had been found in a bag belonging to Supreme Court Justice Ali Hameed, one of two judges arrested after Yameen declared a state of emergency. The cash was in US dollars and Maldivian rufiyaa.

organized crime were considered.

## AFGHANISTAN

### [Afghanistan, Pakistan Delegations Meet in Islamabad](#)

Pajhwok / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 11th February

Afghan government delegation which arrived in Islamabad on Friday, Feb. 9, has started talks with their Pakistani counterparts under the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS), a media report said on Saturday, Feb. 10. The two sides would explore ways for enhancing cooperation in different areas, focusing on anti-terror cooperation, officials and diplomats said. Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai is leading a high level delegation in the talks, which is the second round of joint working groups in a week. The first round was held in Kabul on Feb. 3 despite tensions in the wake of the deadliest Taliban-claimed attacks in Kabul on Jan. 20 and Jan. 27, which had killed nearly 125 people and injured over 250.

### [FM Hakimi meets EU envoy for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy](#)

The Kabul Times | 10th February

Minister of Finance on the continuation of his visit to Brussels, met Federica Mogherini, high representative of the European Union for foreign affairs and security policy, a statement from the ministry of finance said yesterday. In the meeting both sides discussed Afghan-EU joint committee for implementation of Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development (CAPD), the Afghan Peace Process, the progress made in the implementation of Afghanistan's reform programs, agreed upon at the Brussels Conference for Afghanistan in October 2016, Afghan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF), Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF), the election process and other government reform programs, the statement concluded.

## BANGLADESH

### [PM Hasina reaches Rome for IFAD meeting](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 12th February

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina arrived at Rome on Sunday on a four-day official visit to Italy to join the upcoming meeting of the Rome-based International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as one of its keynote speakers at the invitation of IFAD President Gilbert F Houngbo. Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury and Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali are accompanying the prime minister. The theme of this year's council is 'From fragility to long-term resilience: Investing in sustainable rural economies.'

### [Indian automakers eye more of Bangladesh market](#)

The Daily Star | 12th February

Indian automotive manufacturers will hold an exposition in Dhaka towards the end of the year with a view to winning over Bangladeshi buyers, said a top official of the neighbouring country's apex trade body for the sector. "We consider Bangladesh as an important destination," said Debasish Majumder, director of trade fairs of the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM). In 2016, a total of 0.42 million vehicles were registered in Bangladesh, up 31.25 percent from a year earlier, according to the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority.

## BHUTAN

### [70,000 non-subsidised LPG cylinders made available in thromdes](#)

Kuensel | 10th February

To make enough Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) available in the country, the Department of Trade (DoT) in collaboration with oil distributors launched non-subsidised LPG yesterday. More than 70,000 non-subsidised LPG cylinders will now be available in the country. A subsidised LPG costs Nu 537 for a refill. In Thimphu refilling a non-subsidised LPG will cost Nu 815. Chief Trade Officer at DoT, Rinchen Lhazom, said that the amount to refill a non-subsidised LPG would differ for different locations due to dissimilar transport charges. "The price difference is Nu 278 for refilling and unlike subsidised LPG, non-subsidised LPG will not require customer card or an e-coupon for refill. The customer can have as many non-subsidised LPG cylinders as needed any time."

## MALDIVES

### [DJA's Spokesperson Faisal arrested](#)

Sun Online | 12th February

Spokesperson at Department of Judicial Administration (DJA), Faisal Adam has been taken into police custody. Attorney Hussain Shameem tweeted on Sunday that Faisal has been arrested and taken to the police headquarters. He said Faisal has not been allowed to meet his attorneys yet. "Sun" was not able to immediately reach the police media official for a comment. Meanwhile, Chief Justice Abdulla Saeed, Supreme Court Judge Ali Hameed and Judicial Administrator at DJA – Hassan Saeed are in police custody for suspected involvement in an attempt to overthrow the government.

### [Maldives, China discuss declining tourist numbers](#)

Mihaaru | 11th February

Tourism Minister Moosa Zameer and Chinese ambassador for Maldives H.E. Zhang Lizhong has met to discuss the declining number of tourists to Maldives after the government declared a state of emergency on February 5. In a tweet by Maldives Marketing and Public and Relations (MMPRC), it said that discussions were about the potential impacts of the recent decline in Chinese tourists. After China had advised their tourists against travelling to Maldives due to declaration of state of emergency, many guests have canceled their booking to resorts, guest houses and safaris.

## MYANMAR

### [UK's Johnson urges 'independent' probe of refugee crisis in Suu Kyi talks](#)

Mizzima | 12th February

Britain's foreign minister Boris Johnson stopped off in Myanmar on Sunday to press Aung San Suu Kyi on the need for an independent probe into violence in Rakhine state, as the country faces mounting pressure to punish troops accused of abuses against the Muslim Rohingya. Johnson met with the Myanmar leader, whose reputation among the international community has crumbled over her handling of the crisis, in the capital Naypyidaw while on a four-day Asian tour. The meeting followed Johnson's visit to a refugee camp in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district, where nearly 700,000 Rohingya have sought sanctuary after fleeing a Myanmar army crackdown launched in northern Rakhine last August.

### [Ethnic entrepreneurs to get own business association](#)

Mizzima | 12th February

Ethnic entrepreneurs across Myanmar are planning to establish a new business association, according to the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI), state media reported on 12 February. The new association will represent entrepreneurs in regions lagging behind in development. The formation of the ethnic entrepreneurs' association is aimed at promoting balanced development between urban and rural areas, and ensuring private sector development. U Aye Win, joint general secretary of the UMFCCI, said the new association would officially be formed within a month, according to the report.

## NEPAL

### [Govt formation begins in Province 3 and 5](#)

MyRepublica | 11th February

Province 3 and 5 have begun to form provincial governments, the first in Nepal's federalism. Dormani Paudel and Shankar Pokherel from CPN-UML have been elected as Chief Ministers of Province 3 and 5 respectively. In both provinces, political parties submitted an official letter to the Office of Province Chief on Sunday regarding their candidates for the position.

### [Protection for Indian farmers to further erode Nepal's competitiveness](#)

MyRepublica | 11th February

Nepal's ailing agriculture sector has yet another challenge to cope with, as assurance of 50 percent profits for Indian farmers by their government will have a negative impact on Nepali products, according to Nepali farmers and agricultural experts. Most likely, products of Nepali farmers, who get marginal support or incentives from their government, will find it hard to remain competitive with those Indian products. Farmers even fear they will be driven out of profession.

## PAKISTAN

### [PML-N govt should seek short-term borrowing from IMF](#)

The Express Tribune | 12th February

The PML-N government is being proposed by its well-wishers to seek \$6-7 billion in short-term emergency funds under the standby arrangement from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to improve its highly critical foreign exchange reserves. However, officials are fearful that any standby arrangement, if agreed by the fund, will be full of front-loaded conditionality to achieve the much-needed economic stabilisation. Ever since Panama leaks surfaced some two years ago, the PML-N government has stopped giving priority to the economy and as a result fiscal deficit and current account deficit were getting precarious with the passage of time.

### [Asma Jahangir, Fearless Pakistani Rights Activist, Dies at 66](#)

The New York Times | 11th February

Asma Jahangir, a leading Pakistani rights activist, fearless critic of the military's interference into politics and a staunch defender of the rule of law, died on Sunday in Lahore. She was 66. Ms. Jahangir, a human rights lawyer, had a reputation of speaking truth to power and defending the weak and the marginalized, women and minorities against injustice. She gained international acclaim for being the voice of conscience in a country where liberal, secular voices have been continuously under threat. She was the founding chairwoman of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, an independent group, and was a trustee of the International Crisis Group. She won

several local and international awards and served as the United Nations rapporteur on human rights and extrajudicial killings.

## **SRI LANKA**

### [Sri Lanka signs economic cooperation agreement with Czech Republic](#)

Colombo Page | 11th February

Sri Lanka and the Czech Republic signed a landmark agreement on Mutual Cooperation aiming to formulate and implement a framework of economic engagement through the establishment of a joint committee to promote bilateral trade, investment and economic relations. The Minister of Development Strategies & International Trade Malik Samarawickrama plans to formulate the action framework under this Agreement.

### [Sri Lankan leaders agree to continue the unity government till 2020](#)

Colombo Page | 12th February

The majority party of the Sri Lanka's government, United National Party, has agreed to continue the coalition government formed with the Sri Lanka Freedom party under the leadership of President Maithripala Sirisena until 2020 when the President's term expires. This decision taken by the majority party is to be informed to the leaders of all parties of the United National Front government.

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### ***About Ananta Aspen Centre***

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