



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

**February 14, 2018 | Volume - 6/02**

**Defence Ministry, India has assured there won't be a military intervention**

Sun Online | 13th February  
Ministry of Defence and National Security has said that India has assured that they would not be sending troops to the Maldives. In a statement on the issue today after many opposition supporters have called for military intervention from India over the current political climate in the Maldives. The Ministry said that India is an old friend of the Maldives that continue to maintain close relations and has fully assured that they would not be sending troops to the Maldives. Noting that the Maldivian government has not requested any assistance from a foreign military and advised not to spread such rumors as it affects the relations with countries.

**Pakistan's Army Chief Joins Conference in Afghan Capital**

AP / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 14th February  
The Afghan capital is hosting military chiefs from several neighboring countries, including Pakistan's army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, for a conference to plot a course on how to deal with escalating terrorism in the region. The army chiefs will also look at the region's burgeoning narcotics trade as Afghanistan hits record levels of poppy production. Afghanistan is the world's largest producers of opium, the raw material used to make heroin. Tuesday's (Feb. 13) meeting in Kabul will also include U.S. and NATO representatives. Bajwa's presence is particularly significant as both Afghan and U.S. officials ratchet up pressure on Pakistan to close Taliban sanctuaries on its soil. Islamabad denies charges that it harbors militants.

**Exclusive: U.S. pushes motion to put Pakistan on global terrorist - financing watchlist**

Reuters | 13th February  
The United States has put forward a motion to place Pakistan on a global terrorist-financing watchlist with an anti-money-laundering monitoring group, according to a senior Pakistani official. Pakistan has been scrambling in recent months to avert being added to a list of countries deemed non-compliant with terrorist financing regulations by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a measure that officials fear could hurt its economy. Pakistan had been on the FATF watchlist from 2012 to 2015.

## AFGHANISTAN

### [Uzbekistan Cuts Price of Power Exports to Afghanistan](#)

Pajhwok / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 14th February

Uzbekistan has decided to decrease the price of power exports to Afghanistan, the Afghan national security advisor (NSA) office said on Tuesday, Feb. 13. Qader Shah, spokesman for the NSA, told Pajhwok Afghan News HanifAtmar, during a formal trip, attended a security commission meeting in Uzbekistan three days ago. Bilateral security and economic commission was created after President Ashraf Ghani's latest visit to the neighbouring country. The joint panel has been tasked with executing programmes on economic and security cooperation between the two nations.

### [UK to Boost Strength of Elite Force in Afghanistan](#)

Pajhwok / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 13th February

The United Kingdom is set to raise the strength of its elite force in Afghanistan from 50 to more than 100 by the end of March, a media report said on Sunday. Since the toppling of the Taliban regime in 2001, the special unit has fought in Afghanistan, where 500 regular infantry troops are currently stationed in Kabul. According to Daily Star Sunday, the commandos will conduct kill-or-capture operations alongside US special forces under the American-led Joint Special Operations Command. "Part of the reason for boosting the number of SAS troops is to take some of the pressure off those already there. At the moment they carry out missions every day," the newspaper said.

## BANGLADESH

### [Donors losing interest in Rohingyas: WFP](#)

The Daily Star | 14th February

World Food Programme Executive Director David Beasley has said donor agencies are gradually losing their interest in providing food assistance for the displaced Rohingyas in Bangladesh. The WFP is playing a leading role in feeding one million Rohingyas living in Bangladesh, Foreign Secretary M Shahidul Haque told reporters quoting David as saying. "He [David] informed the prime minister that the interest of the donor agencies to feed the Rohingyas was decreasing and the WFP was trying to keep the interest alive among the donor agencies under the UN system. But it is very difficult for them to keep it up," Shahidul said.

### [PM Hasina urges development partners to invest in rural economies](#)

Dhaka Tribune | 13th February

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Tuesday, Feb. 13, urged development partners to invest in sustainable rural economies to ensure resilience to agricultural crisis, as inclusive and sustainable rural transformation holds the key to eradicating poverty and hunger. "The development partners have to be a little more generous in order to eliminate poverty and hunger. The world appears to be ready for it now. I would like to urge you to invest in sustainable rural economies," she said while delivering her keynote speech at the 41st session of the IFAD Governing Council held at the headquarters of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Rome, Italy. The Bangladesh premier said: "We believe that in order to ensure resilience, investment in the rural economy is a key factor. This, we believe, cannot be achieved without global partnership and cooperation."

## BHUTAN

### [PM may sue Opposition for defamation](#)

Kuensel | 13th February

The Prime Minister may charge the Opposition for defamation, should the corrupt practice as alleged prove fallacious. After the Opposition accused the Prime Minister for misusing public resources to develop his private residence at Taba, Lyonchhen Tshering Tobgay at a press conference yesterday, asked the Opposition to report the matter to Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for immediate investigation. In a press conference on February 7, Opposition Leader, Pema Gyamtsho (PhD) said that a thorough investigation needs to be carried out into the alleged misuse of public resources by the PM to develop his private residence. The misuse of public resources for private benefits, he said, was a serious form of corruption.

## **MALDIVES**

### [China: Laamu link road project started during the tenure President Nasheed](#)

Sun Online | 13th February

Chinese Embassy in Maldives has said that the Chinese projects in the Maldives criticized by the former Maldivian President, Mohamed Nasheed, began during his Presidency and raised the question as to why the former President is opposed to it and creating tension between the two countries. Spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in Maldives, Yang Yin, said that China and Maldives jointly build the Belt and Road Initiative under the principle of wide consultation, joint contribution and mutual benefit, which benefits the people of the two countries and accords with the interests of two peoples. And the Maldivian people would soon benefit from the bridge project.

## **MYANMAR**

### [Two ethnic groups sign up to Myanmar's flagging peace process](#)

Mizzima | 14th February

Two armed ethnic groups signed a ceasefire in Myanmar on Tuesday in a move which the government hopes will revive a flagging peace process dogged by continuing fighting and widespread distrust of the army. The New Mon State Party (NMSP) and Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) inked the National Ceasefire Agreement in the capital Naypyidaw, joining eight other militias who had signed before Aung San Suu Kyi took office. Suu Kyi, whose official title is State Counsellor, made peace her top priority when her civilian administration took office in 2016 to end five decades of military domination.

### [PEN America to honour imprisoned Myanmar journalists](#)

Mizzima | 14th February

PEN America announced yesterday that it would honour imprisoned Myanmar reporters Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, who were arrested on December 12, 2017, while investigating violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state, with the 2018 PEN/ Barbey Freedom to Write Award. Since 1987, PEN America has honored more than 50 individual writers worldwide with the Freedom to Write Award, recognizing their struggle in the face of adversity for the right to free expression. Of the 42 writers who were imprisoned at the time of announcing the award, 37 have been freed, due in part to the attention and pressure the award generates. "By simply doing their jobs, Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo demonstrated exceptional courage, knowing full well the risks they were taking in pursuing this story. Yet they continued in their dogged and deeply important investigation.

## **NEPAL**

### [Indian envoy meets UML Chair Oli](#)

The Kathmandu Post | 13th February

Indian Ambassador to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri held a meeting with CPN-UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli, who is widely seen as the next Prime Minister, at Singhadurbar in the Capital on Tuesday. On the occasion, leader Oli said that government formation and unity between his party and CPN (Maoist Centre) will move head simultaneously. He also urged the Indian Ambassador to provide development assistance. Extending best wishes on the auspicious occasion Mahashivaratri, Ambassador Puri said that the Indian government is willing to work with the new government. Earlier, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had telephoned former Prime Minister Oli twice and told that the Indian government is eager to cooperate with the new government.

## PAKISTAN

### [Peace in Afghanistan will favour Pakistan, NA speaker tells German envoy](#)

The Express Tribune | 13th February

National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that Afghanistan is a neighbouring country and restoration of peace there would favour Pakistan and the entire region. Pakistan would like to have good relations with the United States as well as with all neighbouring countries based on mutual respect and equality, he said while speaking to German Ambassador Martin Kobler. He said that Pakistan and Germany enjoyed cordial and cooperative relations, which needed to be further strengthened through substantive and long term parliamentary and economic cooperation.

### [Military aid to Pakistan will help defeat IS, Al Qaeda: US](#)

Dawn | 14th February

The Trump administration has asked Congress to approve \$336 million of civil and military aid to Pakistan for the next fiscal year, arguing that the proposed military assistance will help defeat Al Qaeda and the militant Islamic State (IS) group. The total request is \$10 million less than the previous year and links the defence assistance to Islamabad's action against alleged terror safe havens on its soil. The request for military assistance also makes clear that the implementation of FY 2019 FMF (Foreign Military Finance) resources is "contingent on Pakistan taking appropriate action to expand cooperation in areas where interests converge and to address areas of national divergence, in line with the Administration's South Asia strategy".

## SRI LANKA

### [Sri Lankan President seeks public support to clean up the country of malpractices](#)

Colombo Page | 13th February

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena seeks the popular support for a comprehensive program against bribery, corruption, frauds malpractices and waste with the intention to build a clean country. The Presidential Secretariat has launched a national program to achieve this goal and sought the input of the public for a board dialogue, state radio reported.

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