



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

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UN Security Council to discuss Maldivian political crisis

Sun Online | 8th February

The United Nations Security Council is scheduled to hold a secret meeting this Thursday, 8th February, to discuss the current political crisis in Maldives, reports AFP, in correspondence with foreign diplomats. AFP says the UN's Political Affairs Department will be reading its report on the political crisis at the secret meeting. UN's Secretary-General António Guterres appealed to the Maldivian government to end the 15-day State of Emergency in a statement last Tuesday, 6th February. The Secretary-General also advised the Maldivian government to respect the Supreme Court order on February 1 for the immediate release and retrial on nine political figures sentenced to prison, and the immediate reinstatement of 12 parliamentarians. The Supreme Court order has since been amended and the order for release of nine politicians annulled.

Eight countries push UN to take up Myanmar Rakhine crisis

MIZZIMA | 9th February

Britain, France, the United States and five other countries asked the UN Security Council on Wednesday to discuss the fate of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees driven from Myanmar, diplomats said. The council will hold a meeting on Tuesday to hear UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi report on the crisis sparked by an army crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine state in August. Sweden, Poland, the Netherlands, Kazakhstan and Equatorial Guinea requested the talks along with the three permanent council members.

Delegation from EU in Maldives for update on political crisis

Sun Online | 8th February

A delegation from European Union has arrived in Maldives for an update on the current political crisis in Maldives. The delegation includes representatives from the UK and Germany. The delegation met with members of opposition political parties this Thursday, 8th February. Opposition party members which participated in the meeting includes North Henveyru MP Abdulla Shahid (from MDP), deputy leader of Jumhoory Party – Kinbidhoo MP Abdulla Riyaz, and Maduvvari MP Mohamed Ameeth. The delegation is reportedly also scheduled to meet with government officials. The visit comes amid widespread concern over the political crisis in Maldives. Countries which have expressed concern over the situation includes the UK, US, Australia, India and Sri Lanka.

AFGHANISTAN

[Afghan Officials Welcome US Raids on Taliban](#)

Tolonews / Daily Outlook Afghanistan | 8th February

The Afghan government has welcomed the US Air Force B-52 airstrikes on Taliban targets in the north of Afghanistan and called for more raids on the resurgent group. A US Air Force B-52 bomber recently increased its strikes against insurgents in the north of the country after focused air raids in the south. The latest airstrike of the US B-52 bomber targeted Taliban hideouts, their fighters and stolen Afghan National Army vehicles, according to US forces in Afghanistan. The airstrike has reportedly targeted Taliban strongholds, training camps and drugs processing centers in bordering areas between Afghanistan's Badakhshan with Tajikistan and China.

[India contributing \\$1 million for Balkh cricket stadium construction](#)

Khaama Press | 8th February

The government of India will spend around \$1 million for the construction of a standard cricket stadium in northern Balkh province of Afghanistan. The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) said Wednesday, 7th February, that the Cricket Board of Afghanistan, the Afghan Government and the Indian Embassy in Kabul signed a tri-lateral agreement to support the cricket sports in Afghanistan. According to a report by ACB, as per the agreement, the Indian government will invest 1.765 Million USD for the development of cricket infrastructure in three provinces of the country namely Balkh, Kandahar and Logar provinces.

[Karzai urges US to impose sanctions on Pak military and intelligence](#)

Khaama Press | 8th February

The former Afghan President Hamid Karzai has urged the United States to impose sanctions on Pakistan's military and intelligence as he accused the two institutions of harboring the Taliban militants. Karzai made the remarks during an exclusive interview with the Associated Press where he echoed the complaints from the government of Afghanistan regarding the safe havens of the Taliban in Pakistan. Pointing towards the recent Tweet of the President Donald Trump regarding Pakistan, Karzai said "We hope the U.S. will now act in Pakistan." But he added that "doesn't mean that the Pakistan people should be hurt or that war should be launched in Pakistan."

BANGLADESH

[Bangladesh ex-PM Khaleda Zia jailed amid clashes](#)

BBC News Bangla | 9 February

Bangladeshi police have clashed with thousands of protesters, as opposition leader Khaleda Zia was jailed for five years for corruption. Ms Zia, a former prime minister, denies misusing international funds donated to a charitable children's trust. The jail sentence may mean the 72-year-old is barred from parliamentary polls due later this year. The case is one of dozens pending against Ms Zia, a long-time rival of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

BHUTAN

[Hydropower projects' progress hamper MoEA's performance](#)

KUENSEL | 8th February

As it has no authority over the project management, assessing the Ministry of Economic Affairs' performance based on the progress of construction hydropower projects is unfair, according to officials. The secretary, Dasho

Yeshey Wangdi and director general of hydropower and power systems department, Sonam P Wangdi submitted this to the Prime Minister during the mid-year review of the Annual Performance Agreement (APA) yesterday in Thimphu. Of the 49 success indicators, the ministry achieved five, 37 are on track and seven at risk. Of the seven indicators at risk, four pertain to hydropower projects.

MALDIVES

[Ministers dispatched to China, Pakistan, Saudi for updates on political crisis](#)

Sun Online | 8th February

Cabinet ministers have been dispatched to China, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia as special envoys of President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom to provide updates on the current political crisis in Maldives. Some foreign countries have issued travel advisories, warning their citizens against travelling to Maldives due to the political crisis which unfolded in the country with the surprise Supreme Court order for the immediate release and retrial of nine political figures on February 1. The foreign countries which issued travel advisories include Maldives' biggest tourism market – China, and neighboring India – which has seen a sharp rise in number of tourists to Maldives in recent years. The UK, Canada and Russia also issued travel advisories.

MYANMAR

[U.S. passes Burma Human Rights and Freedom Act](#)

MIZZIMA | 9th February

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has passed legislation authored by U.S. Senators John McCain (R-AZ), Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Ben Cardin (D-MD), a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to impose targeted sanctions and travel restrictions on senior Burmese military officials allegedly responsible for human rights abuses in Rakhine State. The Burma Human Rights and Freedom Act would prohibit specific military cooperation with the Burmese military until the Departments of State and Defense can certify that officials have halted the violence. The bill would also support economic and security sector reform, and encourage Burma's successful transition of power to a civilian government.

[Myanmar and Thailand border trade reaches nearly US\\$1.16 billion](#)

MIZZIMA | 9th February

The value of border trade between Myanmar and Thailand has reached nearly US\$1.16 billion, with the Myawaddy border trade gate accounting for the largest volume of trade, state media reported quoting the Ministry of Commerce. The Myanmar-Thailand border trade totalled \$1.16 billion this fiscal year, between 1 April 2017 and 26 January 2018, which included \$336 million in exports and \$824 million in imports.

NEPAL

[Experts bat for national security, 'neighbourhood first' on foreign policy](#)

MyRepublica | 8th February

A team of experts has stressed national security and neighbourhood policy as top priority of Nepal's foreign policy. The experts were also for mainstreaming the economic diplomacy. A High Level Task Force on Foreign Policy, comprised of foreign relations experts, professionals of international relations and security practitioners, urged the government to first prioritize 'neighbourhood with greater priority'- categorically mentioning India and China.

[NC meets to finalize Ordinance](#)

MyRepublica | 9th February

The central committee of Nepali Congress is meeting at 9 AM at the Prime Minister's Residence, Baluwatar to finalize provincial parliamentary ordinance. In lack of a clear ordinance, the country's oldest party hasn't been able to nominate its provincial parliamentary members. Following the provincial elections, an Ordinance Drafting Committee was formed under Minindra Rijal, the party's central member. Today's meeting will make necessary changes on the draft and approve accordingly.

PAKISTAN

[Four Pakistanis beheaded in Saudi Arabia for rape, murder](#)

The Express Tribune | 9th February

Saudi Arabia executed four Pakistani men on Thursday, convicted of raping and murdering a woman and raping her teenage son, the interior ministry said. The men were also convicted of stealing jewellery and cash after entering the woman's home in Riyadh and raping and strangling her, according to a ministry statement cited by the official SPA news agency. The oil-rich Kingdom has executed 20 people since the start of 2018.

SRI LANKA

[Ethiopia looks forward to greater cooperation with Sri Lanka](#)

Colombo Page | 8th February

Tsegab Kebebew, Director General of Asia and Oceania Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia said that Ethiopia looks forward to have greater cooperation with Sri Lanka in the political, economic, tourism and cultural fields in the near future. Kebebew was speaking at an event held at the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Ethiopia to celebrate the 70th anniversary of independence of Sri Lanka, Government Information Department said.

About Ananta Aspen Centre

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