

Weekly Media Updates **(2 – 8 July, 2018)**

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Africa

- **Ethiopia Considers Building Oil Terminal in Djibouti¹**

Capacity limitations at the Djibouti oil terminal have prompted the Ethiopian government to start planning to build an oil terminal at the port of Djibouti. The Ethiopian Petroleum Supply Enterprise (EPSE) receives the petroleum products from oil tanker vessels and stores it in the oil terminal until it is loaded on fuel tanker trucks that transport the products to main land Ethiopia.

CEO of the Ethiopian Petroleum Supply Enterprise, Tadesse Hailemariam, has said that the Djibouti Horizon Fuel Terminal (DHT) has capacity limitation to handle Ethiopia's increasing fuel imports.

The Djibouti Horizon Fuel terminal tank farm has a total of 31 tanks with a storage capacity of 300,000cu.m of petroleum products. The terminal has various tanks for gasoline (benzene), gas oil (diesel), kerosene and jet fuel. DHT Company has allocated half of the tank farm more than 150,000 cu.m of petroleum storage capacity for Ethiopia. EPSE uses the facility to store 72,000cu.m of diesel, 70,000cu.m jet fuel, gasoline 10,000cu.m and 10,000cu.m fuel oil. "

The military strength including the US, France and China have military bases that consumes large amount of fuel for their aircraft and naval ships. The military bases use DHT to satisfy their petroleum demands.

According to Tadesse, the Ethiopian government is now planning to jointly develop a new oil terminal with the government of Djibouti. The planned tank farm will have the capacity to store 30,000cu.m of petroleum products and a JT pipe that receives oil from tanker vessels. Preliminary study undertaken by ESPE indicates that the planned oil terminal could cost to the tune of USD 220 million.

- **Macron Says 'Long Run' Solution to Africa Migration is in Africa²**

French President Emmanuel Macron during an address to 300 young entrepreneurs on the second day of his visit to Nigeria, on 4 July 2018, called for Africa and Europe to reach a "win-win" solution to migration

Saying that the continents share a "common destiny", Macron outlined his vision to solve thorny issue shaking the European Union, saying it can only be solved in the "long run" by Africa."We have to work with African governments," said Macron.

Macron said for him the sustainable answer is not just security, adding that people were leaving peaceful countries including Senegal, Ivory Coast and Nigeria because of "a lack

¹ Aljazeera, 26 June 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/06/eritrea-delegation-arrives-ethiopia-landmark-talks-180626112950526.html>

² Radio France, 5 July 2018, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201807050426.html>

of hope, a lack of opportunities. He said "these people, given the magnitude of this wave, cannot be accepted, at least, not all of them," said Macron. "We need more Africans to succeed in Africa."

- **Ethiopia removes OLF, ONLF and Ginbot 7 from terror list³**

Ethiopia's parliament has approved a government recommendation to take three rebel groups off the country's list of terrorist organisations. Parliament, which is controlled by the ruling EPRDF coalition with all 547 seats currently held by members of the party, passed the resolution unanimously on 5 July 2018.

The groups - Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and Ginbot 7 - have each been engaged in armed struggles against the government in Addis Ababa. Fitsum Arega, the Ethiopian prime minister's chief of staff, said on Twitter on Saturday that the "Cabinet has submitted a resolution to parliament for ratification that will rescind the designation of OLF, ONLF & Ginbot 7 as terrorist groups".

The cabinet had also sent a law to parliament granting amnesty to individuals and groups involved in armed struggle against the government, according to Fitsum Arega, the Ethiopian prime minister's chief of staff.

Last month, Ginbot 7 said it would cease armed attacks in the country following reforms announced by the new government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Ginbot 7, an outlawed opposition group formed after a disputed election in 2005 and named after the date in the Ethiopian calendar when the vote took place - has claimed responsibility for numerous deadly attacks in the past.

- **Villagers Resist al-Shabab Militants Recruiting Children⁴**

At least 15 people were killed in central Somalia when villagers clashed with Al-Shabab militants trying to recruit their children as fighters. According to local sources, 10 militants and five villagers died in the fighting in Aad village, in the central Galmudug administration.

- **Central African Republic: Truth and Reconciliation Commission is Pathway to Peace - UN⁵**

A U.N. human rights official is urging the government of the Central African Republic to establish, without delay, a truth and reconciliation commission as a pathway to peace. Marie-Therese Keita-Bocoum welcomes progress made in institutional reforms this year.

³ Aljazeera, 5 July 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/06/ethiopia-olf-onlf-ginbot-7-terror-list-180630110501697.html>

⁴ Voice of America, 5 July 2018, https://allafrica.com/stories/201807050172.html?utm_campaign=allafrica%3Ainternal&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_content=promote%3Aaans%3Aabafbt

⁵ VOA, 5 July 2018, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201807050178.html>

But, she says authorities in the Central African Republic have to do much, much more to repair the country's chronically troubled security and political situation.

Speaking to the U.N. Human Rights Council on 4 July 2018, Marie-Therese Keita-Bocoum said escalating attacks by armed groups are traumatizing the population, which is losing trust in the ability of the government to protect it. She deplores the hate speech employed by several factions, which, in many cases has a dangerous religious component. She says the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission is an important element in this mix.

- **South Africa Signs Free Trade Agreement With AU⁶**

South Africa has signed the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement with the African Union. Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies confirmed the signing of the 250-pages document in a video put out by the department of Trade and Industry (dti) on Twitter. In March, 2018 President Cyril Ramaphosa signed the Kigali protocol indicating South Africa's commitment to signing the trade agreement. However, Pretoria failed to join 44 other African countries in signing, on the grounds that there were certain areas within the agreement that required further clarification in terms of South Africa's constitutional and internal processes, Davies explained in March. Davies reiterated this reasoning in July 1 video confirming that the signing was going ahead after the necessary vetting had been undertaken by legal advisors. The government also signed two annexures on trading goods and services on the continent.

- **SA Looks to Ghana To Beat Rising Fuel Prices⁷**

The South African government is seeking to be part of oil exploration and President Cyril Ramaphosa made the statement during a press briefing at the Union Buildings after he met with his Ghanaian counterpart Nana Akufo-Addo. The west African leader and his cabinet are in South Africa on a one-day official state visit. Ramaphosa said Akufo-Addo had informed him of a new oil exploration block that Ghana was starting, saying South Africa would take advantage of the invite. This comes as South Africa was in the middle of unprecedented fuel price increases, blamed on rand/dollar exchange rates and the oil prices.

- **Angola Court Acquits Journalists Of Insulting The State⁸**

Two Angolan journalists were acquitted by a judge on July 6, 2018 over an article of accusing a former attorney general of corruption, in a verdict welcomed by press freedom activists. Investigative journalist Rafael Marques and editor Mariano Lourenco faced charges of insulting a public authority over the 2016 piece that alleged that Joao Maria de Sousa had been involved in an illegal real estate purchase. Marques and

⁶ IOL, July 2, 2018, <https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/economy/south-africa-signs-free-trade-agreement-with-au-15786508>

⁷ Times Live, July 5, 2018, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-07-05-sa-looks-to-ghana-to-beat-rising-fuel-prices/>

⁸ News24, July 6, 2018, <https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/angola-court-acquits-journalists-of-insulting-the-state-20180706>

LoRenco risked a three-year prison term if convicted. "This court ruled out of order the prosecutor's request to convict the defendants... and therefore decides to send them back to their families at liberty and peace," said judge Josina Falcao. The judge acknowledged that the suspect land sales were "tainted with irregularities" and that the article fulfilled the journalists' duty to inform the public and expose alleged wrongdoing.

- **Angola to Recover Overseas Funds by Year's End, Lourenco Says⁹**

Angola plans to start recovering large funds held by citizens in overseas accounts toward the end of the year under a law meant to repatriate cash that was illegally moved abroad, President Joao Lourenco said. Lourenco said in December 2017 that the government wouldn't ask any questions if wealthy Angolans return their funds and invest in the country, but he didn't set a deadline for the moratorium. "We're carrying out a real crusade against corruption and impunity with a focus on white-collar crime," he said in a speech at the European Parliament in Strasbourg on July 4, 2018. "I'm sure that we will soon start to see the benefits of these measures." Since taking over as president in September after the 38-year rule of Jose Eduardo dos Santos, Lourenco has pledged to fight corruption and improve governance in Africa's second-biggest oil producer. He's also trying to diversify an economy that was crippled by the crude slump from mid-2014.

- **President Tajani Receives The President of Angola: We Must Strengthen European Union Action In Africa¹⁰**

The EU must strengthen its action in Angola and, more in general, in Africa," said European Parliament President, Antonio Tajani, following July 4, 2018 meeting with the President of Angola, João Lourenço. In the next Multilateral Financial Framework – added Tajani – EUR 40 billion should be earmarked for a comprehensive Marshall Plan for Africa that helps mobilise overall investment worth EUR 500 billion in the next ten years on the continent." According to Tajani, Angola is undergoing a democratic transition since the election of President Lourenço in 2017: "The country is working hard to open up to the world, rebuilding the economy, tackling corruption and inequality, and improving citizens' rights. Yet, Angola continues to suffer from structural challenges such as poverty, unemployment, lack of economic diversification and poor industrialisation." The EU must help build a manufacturing base, investing in the country and transferring technology and know-how. European Economic Diplomacy is crucial in this regard," concluded Tajani.

- **Angola's Non-Oil Sector To Grow 5.1 per cent Annually: Minister¹¹**

Angola's non-oil sector is expected to grow 5.1 per cent annually during the 2018-2022 period, State Minister for Economic and Social Development Manuel Nunes Junior said

⁹ Bloomberg, July 4, 2018, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-07-04/angola-to-recover-overseas-funds-by-year-end-lourenco-says>

¹⁰ CNBC Africa, July 4, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/africa/apo/2018/07/04/president-tajani-receives-the-president-of-angola-we-must-strengthen-european-union-action-in-africa/>

¹¹ Xinhua Net, July 4, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/04/c_137301366.htm

on July 3, 2018. He made the statement while speaking to domestic entrepreneurs at a public presentation of Angola's National Development Plan. He explained that agriculture is expected to grow at an annual average rate of 8.9 per cent, manufacturing at 5.9 per cent, services including tourism at 5.9 per cent, fisheries at 4.8 per cent and construction at 3.8 per cent. Meanwhile, the oil sector is only expected to grow about 1.8 percent annually.

- **Mozambique's National Airline Board Sacked After Prime Minister Left Stranded**¹²

Board members from Mozambique's national airline have been sacked after the Prime Minister was left stranded following flight cancellations. Financial difficulties resulted in the airline, state-controlled LAM, being forced to cancel flights as they were unable to pay for fuel. Prime Minister Carlos Agostinho do Rosário was forced to use an air force plane for his official trip to the northern Niassa province. The "chaos" has been going on for three days and the airline has apologised, according to reports in local media. LAM said it was working to ensure flights resumed after the government intervention. The airline had their six year ban from operating in the European Union lifted last year – after the EU was satisfied their concerns about a lack of oversight by aviation authorities had been met.

- **Zimbabwe Opposition Chief Eyes 'Obama Effect' In Historic Poll**¹³

Zimbabwe's main opposition leader and presidential hopeful Nelson Chamisa believes he will ride a wave of youthful optimism to election victory, emulating Barack Obama, Emmanuel Macron and Justin Trudeau. In an interview with AFP, the 40-year-old Chamisa said Zimbabweans were craving generational changes in the landmark July 30, 2018 elections. The vote will pitch him against President Emmerson Mnangagwa, a septuagenarian who was once a pillar of the Mugabe regime. "People are connecting with young leadership," Chamisa declared. Chamisa has led the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) since the death of his mentor and predecessor Morgan Tsvangirai in February 2018. But Chamisa and his MDC party face an uphill battle to win the all-powerful presidency. The opposition has been riven by division since Tsvangirai's death with several MDC splinter groups emerging, threatening to dilute Chamisa's share of the vote. Polling has also suggested that Zanu-PF still enjoys strong support in its northern heartland and in some rural areas.

- **US Cuts Aid to Zimbabwe Action Groups Ahead Of Election**¹⁴

The United States said on July 2, 2018 that it had cut funding to three Zimbabwean civil action groups citing "possible misuse" of money ahead of July 30 elections, the first vote since Robert Mugabe was ousted. The United States Agency for International

¹² The Independent, July 6, 2018,

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/mozambique-national-airline-lam-board-sacked-flights-cancelled-carlos-agostinho-do-rosario-a8434811.html>

¹³ News24, July 8, 2018, <https://www.news24.com/Africa/Zimbabwe/zimbabwe-opposition-chief-eyes-obama-effect-in-historic-poll-20180708>

¹⁴ News24, July 2, 2018, <https://www.news24.com/Africa/Zimbabwe/us-cuts-aid-to-zimbabwe-action-groups-ahead-of-election-20180702>

Development (USAID) reduced its support for the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights), the Election Resource Centre (ERC) and the Counselling Services Unit (CSU). "We did have to cut some funding. We have regular safeguards and checks on how the money is used," US embassy spokesperson David McGuire told AFP. McGuire said USAID provided about US\$250 million aid to Zimbabwe annually. Okay Machisa, director of ZimRights, confirmed the cut in funds, but vowed to continue work. The US embassy said on Twitter that "as a result of regular internal oversight, USAID became aware of the possible misuse of US assistance funding."

- **Zimbabwe Army in a Fix Over Elections¹⁵**

The top leadership of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces appears torn between the old and new order after they dodged a crucial press briefing convened in Harare on July 4, 2018 to allay fears that the army may not accept a Zanu PF defeat at the forthcoming polls. They were swirling questions about the absence of ZDF commander, Phillip Valerio Sibanda and other top commanders. Zimbabwe's military vowed on July 4, 2018 to stay neutral in upcoming elections, dismissing suggestions it would deploy service personnel to influence national polls scheduled for July 30. The army appeared to have staged its media briefing in response to a report in the Standard daily that it had deployed active service personnel to rural areas to campaign for candidates in ZANU-PF primary contests.

- **Namibia Finally Pens Africa Free Trade Deal¹⁶**

Namibia has finally signed the trillion-dollar African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), which requires members to remove tariffs from 90 per cent of goods to allow free access to commodities, goods and services across the continent. President Hage Geingob signed the much-anticipated trade agreement on July 1, 2018 during the Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) meeting at the 31st Ordinary Session of the Assembly held from July 1-2, in Nouakchott, Mauritania. Inking the deal showcases Namibia's shift from a protectionist stance, celebrated by particularly local manufacturers but heavily criticised by protagonists of trade liberalisation who believe the removal or reduction of tariff obstacles would boost trade and jobs. It is not clear at this stage how this agreement would affect Namibia's infant industry protection ambitions.

- **Oil Groups Eye Offshore Namibia¹⁷**

Visitors to Namibia's coast have traditionally been drawn by the promise of watching wildlife, walking the shipwreck-strewn beaches or even dune-biking. For international investors the country is known for its uranium deposits and diamonds but not as an oil and gas frontier. All that may be about to change. Interest in Namibia as an oil and gas

¹⁵ Bulawayo24 News, July 6, 2018, <https://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-national-byo-139808.html>

¹⁶ New Era, July 5, 2018, <https://www.newera.com.na/2018/07/05/namibia-finally-pens-africa-free-trade-deal/>

¹⁷ Financial Times, July 6, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/e6f8444e-7fab-11e8-8e67-1e1a0846c475>

region has strengthened in recent years, with majors such as France's Total and ExxonMobil of the US investing in acreage. The country has some of the same geological formations as Brazil, whose pre-salt fields have attracted much investment. So far, only small volumes of hydrocarbons have been produced. However, small-cap investors hope that planned drilling activity over the next few months will provide a boost, particularly to three Aim-quoted exploration and production companies active in the region. Eco Atlantic Oil & Gas Quoted on Aim and the Toronto stock exchange, Eco holds exploration acreage offshore of Guyana and Namibia.

- **Tanzania, Kenya Finally Agree To Resolve Protracted Trade Dispute¹⁸**

Tanzanian and Kenyan traders will now freely export milk, wheat and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) into either of the countries' markets following a joint agreement announced on July 5, 2018. However, those trading in edible oils, confectionery, textile products and cement will wait a little longer as Tanzania requested to complete an ongoing verification exercise on the rule of origin for these products. Representatives of the two governments told reporters on July 5 that they have struck an agreement to quickly remove trade barriers that appeared to have escalated recently. The agreement was reached following a three-day consultative meeting held in Dar es Salaam. The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Industries, Trade and Investment. Prof Elisante Ole Gabriel and his Kenyan counterpart Dr Chris Kiptoo broke the news shortly after ending their closed door meeting under the banner of 'Kenya Day Trade and Investment Forum.' Members of the private sector from both countries were in attendance. The two officials said they have signed a communiqué and matrix on how the sticky trade issues should be resolved as Dar and Nairobi looked to better cross boarder trade relations. Trade volume between the two countries, said Dr Kiptoo, has slowed to US\$285 million in 2017 from US\$420 million in 2012.

- **South Sudan Opposition Rejects Plans To Extend Kiir's Tenure¹⁹**

South Sudan's opposition has described as illegal plans to extend the tenure of President Salva Kiir by three years. Opposition spokesman Lam Paul Gabriel called the proposal "definitely illegal" and "anti-peace" as the warring sides pursue a peace agreement. Gabriel told journalists in the capital, Juba, on July 3, 2018 that the plot to keep Kiir in office until 2021 undermines peace talks with opposition forces. The South Sudanese presidency on July 2, 2018 had proposed a bill to parliament to amend the constitution and extend the tenure of President Salva Kiir, his deputies and governors, Paul Yoane Bonju, a member of parliament said. Parliament intends to vote it into law this month, Bonju said. Another legislator, Atem Garang, said the planned extension of Kiir's term is almost guaranteed as the ruling party holds a majority of seats in parliament. "If they don't extend it there will be anarchy and war. You'll have a country without a government," Garang told The Associated Press.

¹⁸ The Citizen, July 6, 2018, <http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/News/1840340-4649016-1mp7cez/index.html>

¹⁹ Al Jazeera, July 3, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/07/south-sudan-opposition-rejects-plans-extend-kiir-tenure-180703154732719.html>

- **Sudan, Egypt Agree to Activate Joint Committees²⁰**

The Sudanese government and its Egyptian counterpart have agreed to activate the joint committees between the two countries during the next period. Sudan's Foreign Ministry Under-Secretary Abdel-Ghani al-Nai'im on July 5, 2018 discussed with the Egyptian Ambassador to Khartoum Osama Shaltout the outcome of the meeting of the joint consular committee which was held recently in Cairo. The two sides agreed to activate the joint mechanisms between the two countries including the technical committee which would meet during the next period in Cairo to prepare for the meeting of the presidential committee which will be held in October 2018 in Khartoum. Also, the meeting agreed to continue joint work to promote regional peace and security, pointing to the need to enhance the economic, cultural and media ties between the two brotherly nations.

- **Sudan Opposition Leader Blocked From Entering Egypt: Party²¹**

Authorities at Cairo airport on July 1, 2018 blocked entry for Sudan's main opposition leader Sadiq al-Mahdi, who has been living in exile in Egypt, his party said. The Umma Party said security stopped former prime minister Mahdi from entering the country as he returned to Cairo after participating at an opposition conference in Berlin. Mahdi, who has been based in Cairo, then flew to London with his daughter Mariam and an aide, his party said. A fixture of Sudanese politics since the 1960s, Mahdi was prime minister from 1966 to 1967 and again from 1986 to 1989. His government was the last one to be democratically elected in Sudan, before it was toppled by a 1989 coup launched by current President Omar al-Bashir. He briefly returned to Khartoum in January 2017 after more than two years of exile in Cairo, but had since returned to the Egyptian capital.

- **Kenya's Leader Of Opposition Raila Odinga Meets PM Narendra Modi²²**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Kenya's leader of opposition Raila Odinga met in New Delhi on 3 July 2018 and discussed the progress in the relationship between the two countries as well as regional and global issues of mutual interest. The prime minister recalled their long association, dating back to over a decade, when he had visited Kenya as the Chief Minister of Gujarat. Mr Odinga, a former prime minister of Kenya, also recalled his earlier visits to India in 2009 and 2012.

- **Eritrean and Ethiopian Leaders Asmara Meeting Ignites Celebration²³**

Ethiopian PM Minister Abiy Ahmed and his entourage arrived in Eritrea in the morning of July 8, 2018; and were warmly received by Eritrean president Isayas Afeworki. The

²⁰ Sudan Tribune, July 7, 2018, <http://sudantribune.com/spip.php?article65807>

²¹ News24, July 2, 2018, <https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/sudan-opposition-leader-blocked-from-entering-egypt-party-20180702>

²² NDTV, July 3, 2018, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/kenyas-leader-of-opposition-raila-odinga-meets-pm-narendra-modi-1877091>

²³ borkena.com, July 8, 2018, <https://www.borkena.com/2018/07/08/eritrean-and-ethiopian-leaders-asmara-meeting-ignites-celebration/>

occasion ignited celebration which rather seems to be laden with hope for a better and brighter future for Eritrea and Ethiopia. On June 5, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed had announced that Ethiopia will accept the Algiers Peace agreement, which ended the long between Ethiopia and Eritrea, including the Boundary Commission Decision which awarded the border town of Badme to Eritrea. Eritrea responded by sending high-level delegation under its Foreign minister Osman Saleh which stayed in Ethiopia for two days. As the delegation concluded its visit and left for Eritrea on June 28, Ethiopia's ministry of Foreign Affairs disclosed that Ethiopian prime minister would travel to Eritrea "soon" to meet with Eritrean president Isayas Afewerki. Prime minister Abiy Ahmed was celebrated like no other leader. Ethiopians and Eritreans living abroad took to social media to express their elation. After nearly two decades, the two countries have also resumed a direct international telephone connection – according to Fitusm Arega.

- **Djibouti Launches 'Africa's Biggest Free Trade Zone'²⁴**

Djibouti on Thursday, July 5, 2018 launched the first phase of Africa's biggest free-trade zone, seeking to capitalise on its strategic position on one of the world's busiest trade routes. At ceremonies in the capital, President Ismael Omar Guelleh hailed the scheme as the culmination of infrastructure projects "boosting Djibouti's place in international trade and commerce". The Horn of Africa nation, located at the mouth of the Red Sea and Suez Canal, in 2017 unveiled three new ports and a railway linking it to landlocked Ethiopia, as part of its bid to become a global trade and logistics hub. The pilot phase launched on Thursday comprises a 240-hectare site. On its scheduled completion 10 years from now, the US\$3.5 billion initiative will span 4 800 hectares - the largest free-trade zone on the continent. A row of Djiboutian and Chinese flags fluttered side by side above the freshly painted bright yellow walls surrounding the expansive project - a symbol of the tiny country's close ties to the Asian giant whose loans have funded its lightning-fast infrastructure growth.

North Africa

- **Italy Calls for an End to Arm Embargo against Libya²⁵**

Italy's interior minister Matteo Salvini has called for the end of the international arms embargo on Libya. He also said that weapons and migrant traffickers have no regard for these kinds of global embargo. Mr. Matteo Salvini made this remarks at a news conference in Rome with a deputy prime minister of the U.N. -backed Libyan government in Tripoli, Ahmed Maiteeg.

²⁴ News24, July 5, 2018, <https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/djibouti-launches-africas-biggest-free-trade-zone-20180705>

²⁵ Associate Press News, https://www.apnews.com/bc07bb58ac8a4d4f880cb4298344efa9?utm_source=Media+Review+for+July+6%2C+2018&utm_campaign=Media+Review+for+July+5%2C+2018&utm_medium=email

He further stated that he would lobby fellow EU countries to adopt Italian his position when he meets fellow interior ministers soon in Austria that Libya needs an immediate aid. Salvini, who currently leads the anti-migrant League party, said he wants to make migrant detention centers in Libya more pleasant and worth living. Migrants and rights advocates have already criticized the inhumane conditions including overcrowding, scarce rations and beatings of those who have been detained by authorities. U.N. refugee agency officials have said they can't gain access to unofficial detention centers run by Libya's powerful, rival militias and other traffickers.

Salvini said Italian security forces will be sent very soon to help staff a military outpost in Ghat, a city in Libya's southwest near Algeria. The Italian presence is aimed at bolstering efforts by Libyan police who are trying to thwart traffickers smuggling in migrants across the southern border in the desert. Italy's new populist government is determined to stop trafficked migrants from reaching Italy by sea, both by aiding the Libyan coast guard and beefing up security at Libya's southern border with Niger, a major route for the human traffickers, who have launched hundreds of thousands of migrants in boats in the central Mediterranean in the last few years.

Earlier this week, Italy announced it was giving 12 vessels to Libya's coast guard, which humanitarian groups say is ill-equipped to properly rescue migrants from traffickers' unseaworthy boats. Salvini said after meeting with the Libyan official that 17 more vessels will come, and said he will ask his counterparts at the EU meeting to do more to assist Libya fight trafficking.

- **Libyan National Army denounces Qatar and Turkey for Abetting Terrorism in the Country²⁶**

The Libyan National army once has come down heavily against Qatar and Turkey for instigating terrorists activate in the country. The officials in the army have said that both the nation have converted the Libya into a training ground for different terror groups. Mr. Ameer Ahmad, spokesperson of Haftar-led national army told about the decision taken in the Paris meet to resolve the national crisis which include holding of election of the parliament and the presidential election before the end of the year. He further said that his army has all the details of the amount transferred by few countries to different groups to continue to train different militias in the country. He also remarked the government has the CCTV footage of the training activates conducted in the night in the town of Benghazi and officials have the precise information of the 4 million Dinar given to Mr. Wissam, a former head of a Benghazi terror outfit.

Mr. Ameer Ahmad also accused both Qatar and Turkey of defying the UN resolution regarding Libya by training to different terror groups in Libya. He added saying that the involvement of Qatar was further exposed after the liberation of the town of Dirna in

²⁶ Asharqal Awsat, <https://aawsat.com/home/article/1322331/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D8%B5%D8%B9%D9%91%D8%AF-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%87-%D8%B6%D8%AF-%D9%82%D8%B7%D8%B1-%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A7>

Libya when it was found that one of the master mind of terror in the country is on the payroll of Qatar.

Central Asia

- **Russia to Electrify Part of INSTC Rail Route in Iran**

Russia has started electrification works on a rail line section of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) in Iran. The 495 kilometre long route connects Garmsar near Tehran to Ince Borun in Iran's Golestan Province near Turkmenistan border. The cost of the project is about euro 1.2 billion, 85 per cent of which to be provided by Russia and 15 per cent by Iran.²⁷

The project will increase the speed and capacity of rail link besides reducing the emissions.

- **Kazakhstan Launches Finance Centre**

Kazakhstan launched on July 5 the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) aiming to become a regional finance hub. The services offered at the Centre include financial technologies, Islamic finance, green finance, capital market and asset management. The Financial Centre includes a management council, a financial services regulator, AIFC exchange, an independent financial court involving nine judges from the UK and the US, and an arbitration centre. It is expected that the Centre would attract US\$ 40 billion investments by 2025.²⁸

President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev opened the Centre in a ceremony, which was also attended by Abu Dhabi Crown Sheikh Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Islamic Development Bank Chair Bandar Hajar and JP Morgan Chase International Chair Jacob Frenkel.

China

- **Visit of Indian Youth Delegation to China, 03-10 July 2018**

As part of the annual India-China Youth Exchange programme, a 200-member Indian Youth Delegation is visiting China from 03-10 July 2018. The delegation comprising of

²⁷ Iran News, "Russian Railways Launches €1.2b Project in Iran," 4 July 2018, <http://irannewsdaily.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Wednesday-2018-4-July.pdf>

²⁸ Assel Satubaldina, "Kazakhstan launches AIFC, seeks to become regional financial hub," 9 July 2018, Astana Times, <https://astanatimes.com/2018/07/kazakhstan-launches-aifc-seeks-to-become-regional-financial-hub/>

students, researchers, youth leaders and young achievers are visiting various Chinese cities including Beijing, Wuhan, Kunming, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Embassy of India hosted a welcome reception for the visiting delegation on 05 July 2018 in Beijing. In his speech, Ambassador of India to China, Mr. Gautam Bambawale while covering all aspects of India-China bilateral relations, emphasized on strengthening people-to-people exchanges between the two countries. Ambassador pointed out that through annual youth exchange programme, the governments of India and China intend to provide opportunities to their youth to mutually understand each other better.²⁹

- **Xi presides over 3rd meeting of central committee for deepening overall reform**

President Xi Jinping, presided over the third meeting of the Central Committee for deepening overall reform on 6 July 2017. Since the 19th National Congress of the CPC, the CPC Central Committee has launched major reforms of overall importance, and significant new progress has been made in comprehensively deepening reform, said Xi, also head of the central committee for deepening overall reform.

More efforts should be made on tackling key difficult issues, invigorating the system, using the experiences from the primary level and inspiring cadres to push reform deeper, said Xi.

Wang Huning and Han Zheng, both members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and deputy heads of the reform committee, attended the meeting.

Participants at the meeting approved a number of documents:

- a guideline on supporting Xiongan New Area in Hebei in deepening overall reform and opening up
- a guideline on creating pilot new era culture practice centers
- a document on regulating after-school training agencies
- a document on reforming and developing pre-school education
- a document on enforcing budget performance management
- a document on improving consumption stimulation system and mechanism and stimulating potential consumption capacity of residents
- a plan to improve consumption stimulation system and mechanism (2018-2020)
- a guideline to create and improve the standards system of basic public services
- a document on strengthening reform on the protection and use of cultural relics
- a guideline on introducing third-party evaluation of government purchased services
- a regulation on preventing and punishing statistical falsification
- a document on measures related to central authorities in the “one-visit” administrative streamlining reform in Zhejiang and other regions

²⁹<http://indianembassybeijing.in/press-release-visit-of-indian-youth-delegation-china-2018.php>

- a document on the pilot promotion mechanism for management staff in public institutions at or below county level
- a document on financial policies for promoting deeper military-civilian integration;
- a plan to set up Internet courts in Beijing and Guangzhou

To deepen overall reform, more efforts should be made on pushing forward the implementation and verifying the results, said a statement released after the meeting.

“Every task should be assigned to a particular person,” said the document.

Participants in the meeting also agreed to draw up measures to inspire the cadres and support reformers in various ways.

In addition, a batch of reform pioneers should be commended in the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the reform and opening up, said the statement.³⁰

- **Xi pledges to make CPC stronger**

Speaking at the national conference on organisational work in Beijing on July 3-4, 2018, Xi Jinping has called on the Party to implement the Party’s organisational line for the new era and make the Party stronger. Xi said, “In order to uphold and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, our party must have the courage to carry out self-reform to make the Party stronger”. He stressed the importance of fostering officials who are loyal to the Party, have moral integrity and demonstrate a keen sense of responsibility. Also, he stressed adhering to the principle of selecting officials on the basis of both integrity and ability, with priority given to integrity, and on the basis of merit regardless of background.³¹

- **Chinese military phases out 100,000 profit-making contract programs**

Chinese authorities have terminated 100,000 of the 106,000 profit-making contract programmes conducted by the military by June 30, 2018. The Chinese military is working on different strategies to phase out a small number of complex and sensitive programmes which are still under operation. This move is part of military reform in China to build a powerful, world-class armed forces.³²

- **Two more Type 055 destroyers launched**

China has launched two Type 055 guided-missile destroyers at a shipyard in Dalian, Liaoning province, on July 3, 2018. As of now, China has launched four Type 055 destroyers, but none are yet commissioned into the PLA Navy. The first of the class was

³⁰ http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/07/c_137306758.htm

³¹ “Xi pledges to make CPC stronger”, http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-07/04/content_8080014.htm.

³² “Chinese military phases out 100,000 profit-making contract programs”, http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-07/04/content_8080006.htm.

launched in late June 2017 at Jiangnan Shipyard in Shanghai while the second ship was launched in late April 2018. Type 055 is China's latest generation of guided-missile destroyers having a displacement of more than 10,000 metric tons. Well-equipped with new types of air defence, missile defence and anti-ship and anti-submarine weapons, the new vessels in the PLA Navy will be put into operation for long-range operations to strengthen China's carrier battle groups in future.³³

- **Ethiopia inaugurates Chinese-built electricity transmission line**

On July 6, 2018, Ethiopia inaugurated a 458-km long 230-Kilo Volts (KV) electricity transmission line that will supply electricity from Alamata in the north to Legetafo in central Ethiopia near Addis Ababa. The line was built jointly by Sichuan Electric Power Transmission and Transformation Construction Limited and Jiangsu ETERN Company Limited. The project was financed by the World Bank and it started construction in November 2017 with a total bid price of \$200 million.³⁴

- **China not geopolitically motivated in cooperation with CEEC: Premier Li**

Addressing the 8th China-CEEC Economic and Trade Forum on July 7, 2018 in Sofia, Bulgaria, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said that China is not geopolitically motivated in promoting its cooperation with 16 Central and Eastern European countries. He said the "16+1 cooperation" mechanism is not only conducive to the development of the two sides, but also helps narrow the gaps within the European Union for balanced development and advancement of the European integration.³⁵

European Union

- **Germany, Austria and Italy to consider 'closing' southern migrant route**

Germany, Austria and Italy will hold talks on "closing" the southern migrant route to Europe, the German interior minister, Horst Seehofer, has announced, after he promised that refugees would not be sent over the Bavarian border to Austria. At a hastily arranged meeting in Vienna with the Austrian chancellor, Sebastian Kurz, Seehofer sought support from Germany's southern neighbour for a controversial border agreement he had reached with the German chancellor, Angela Merkel. Seehofer, whose hard line on immigration has prompted weeks of conflict with the chancellor, promised that Germany would not send asylum seekers to Austria if they were turned away at the German border, although details remained unclear. Separately, Merkel said she wanted to protect Europe's "humanity" in dealing with migrants, spelling out her differences

³³ "Two more Type 055 destroyers launched", http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-07/04/content_8079388.htm.

³⁴ "Ethiopia inaugurates Chinese-built electricity transmission line", Xinhuanet, July 6, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/06/c_137306530.htm.

³⁵ "China not geopolitically motivated in cooperation with CEEC: Premier Li", Xinhuanet, July 7, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/europe/2018-07/07/c_137308441.htm.

with Hungary's prime minister, Viktor Orbán, at a press conference in Berlin. Merkel's Christian Democratic Union party reached an agreement with its sister party, Seehofer's Christian Social Union, to set up special transit centres at the German-Austrian border to process asylum claims. Germany also wants to reach bilateral deals with Greece and Italy so they take back asylum seekers.³⁶

- **EU lawmakers back plan for European Investment Bank work in Iran**

EU lawmakers gave approval on Wednesday (4 July) for the European Investment Bank (EIB) to do business in Iran, overcoming a blocking attempt and keeping alive plans to save the 2015 nuclear deal with Tehran that Washington has abandoned. The EIB, the European Union's not-for-profit long term investment arm, is a key pillar of the bloc's attempts to maintain business links with Iran in the face of Washington's decision to reimpose sanctions on the Islamic Republic. However, the EU lawmakers' decision does not oblige the EIB to work with Iran, a move that could jeopardise its ability to raise money on US markets and so have far reaching consequences for its operations. The European Parliament overwhelmingly blocked a motion by far-right lawmakers seeking to prevent the European Commission from lifting restrictions on the EIB in Iran, setting the stage for the measure to come into effect at the start of August.³⁷

- **MEPs give green light for EU military research fund ahead of NATO summit**

Ahead of the NATO July summit in Brussels, MEPs in Strasbourg on Tuesday (3 July) endorsed the creation of a €500 million program aimed at boosting innovation in the European defence industry. The €500 million strong European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) is meant to fund the development phase between research and production of new and upgraded defence products and technologies in the EU – from studies, to design, testing and up to certification and development phases. Projects will encompass, amongst others, further development of drones, satellite communications and cyber security. The informal agreement reached earlier by the Parliament and the European Council was approved in Strasbourg with 478 votes in favour, 179 against and 23 abstentions. The program, together with the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) agreement, comes at a time when the EU is aiming to step up the bloc's 'strategic autonomy' from the US – and could be a first step towards the establishment of a European defence union.³⁸

- **Chinese Premier Li Keqiang Visiting Germany**

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang has arrived on 8 July 2018 in Berlin for the fifth round of China-Germany intergovernmental consultations. He will meet German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and hold talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

³⁶ The Guardian, 5 July 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/05/germany-austria-and-italy-to-moot-closing-southern-migrant-route>

³⁷ Euractiv, 5 July 2018, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/eu-lawmakers-back-plan-for-european-investment-bank-work-in-iran/>

³⁸ Euractiv, 3 July 2018, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/news/meps-give-green-light-for-eu-military-research-fund-ahead-of-nato-summit/>

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and Chancellor Merkel will co-chair the intergovernmental consultations.³⁹

- **Japan and Poland Discussed Trade and Security**

Foreign Minister of Poland, Jacek Czaputowicz and Foreign Minister of Japan, Taro Kono discussed trade and security on 6 July 2018. As reported, they said that they would “cooperate closely” in the U.N. Security Council and at the European Union level for enhancing security in their regions. Poland’s Jacek Czaputowicz said, “We hope there will be intensification of economic relations between our countries in terms of trade and direct investment.” He added, “Japan is an important investor in the Polish economy. Thanks to it we gain access to modern technologies.”⁴⁰

- **7th Meeting of Leaders of China and the CEECs**

China and Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC) discussed the deepening of ‘open and pragmatic cooperation’. The meeting of leaders of China and CEEC was held in Sofia, Capital of Bulgaria on 7 July 2018 in the framework of ‘16+1’ which was established in 2012. The theme of the meeting was “deepening open and pragmatic cooperation for inclusive prosperity.” Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said, “As long as we insist on pursuing open cooperation, mutual benefit and win-win result, while staying down-to-earth with firm confidence, the 16+1 cooperation will surely be promoted steadily and it will add greater contributions to the development of China-European Union (EU) ties and the world’s openness and prosperity.”⁴¹

- **Brexit secretary David Davis resigns plunging government into crisis**

David Davis has resigned as Brexit secretary, shattering the hard-won consensus around Theresa May’s Chequers deal and plunging her government into crisis. His resignation was swiftly followed by that of fellow Department for Exiting the EU ministers Steve Baker and Suella Braverman. It forces May to reshuffle her government, at the same time as trying to convince backbenchers to support her plan. Davis sent a bluntly worded resignation letter to Theresa May, saying he would not be a “reluctant conscript” to the plan agreed at Chequers, which he said was “certainly not returning control of our laws in any real sense”. Davis has told friends he cannot live with the soft Brexit stance agreed between ministers on Friday (6 July 2018), which proposes a “UK-EU free trade area”, governed by a “common rule book”. The prime minister is facing a growing

³⁹ Chinese premier arrives in Germany for official visit, intergovernmental consultations, Xinhua, July 8, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/08/c_137310656.htm

⁴⁰ Japan, Poland's foreign ministers discuss security, economy, Japan Today, July 7, 2018, <https://japantoday.com/category/politics/japan-poland's-fms-discuss-security-economy-cooperation>; Polish, Japanese FMs talk trade, RadioPoland, July 6, 2018, <http://www.thenews.pl/1/10/Artykul/371816,Polish-Japanese-FMs-talk-trade>

⁴¹ Spotlight: China, CEEC envision new prospects for 16+1 cooperation, Xinhua, July 7, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/08/c_137309738.htm

backlash from the pro-Brexit wing of her party, with MPs warning they are prepared to trigger a leadership contest.⁴²

- **What the cabinet has agreed at Chequers Brexit meeting**

After a long day of talks at Chequers, the cabinet has agreed what Theresa May hailed as a “collective position for the future of our negotiations” on Brexit. It might yet be modified amid Brussels objections or MPs’ concerns but below is the plan as agreed, as set out in a government statement: i) Harmonisation on goods: The statement says the UK will “maintain a common rulebook for all goods” including agricultural products after Brexit, with the UK committing via treaty on continued harmonisation, thus avoiding border friction. ii) Joint jurisdiction of rules: The plan proposes what is termed a “joint institutional framework” for interpreting UK-EU agreements, to be carried out in each jurisdiction by the respective courts. However, decisions by UK courts would involve “due regard paid to EU caselaw in areas where the UK continued to apply a common rulebook”. iii) New customs deal: The government statement puts forward the idea of the so-called facilitated customs arrangement, May’s new attempt at a compromise system that could be acceptable to her cabinet Brexiters and to Brussels. This would see the UK and EU avoid hard borders by being treated as a “combined customs territory”. Under this, the UK would apply domestic tariffs and trade policies for goods intended for the UK, and their EU equivalents for goods heading into the EU. iv) Overall aims: The statement ends by saying the plans, along with details to be set out in a planned white paper, represent “a precise and responsible approach to the final stage of the negotiations”, giving frictionless trade in goods along with regulatory flexibility for services.⁴³

- **Brexit Secretary David Davis has resigned.**

Appointed in 2016, he was negotiating withdrawal of the UK from the European Union. He said in his resignation letter, “The general direction of policy will leave us in at best a weak negotiating position, and possibly an inescapable one.” Prime Minister Theresa May did not agree with his ‘characterisation of the policy’. She said, “I do not agree with your characterisation of the policy we agreed at Cabinet on Friday.”

⁴² The Guardian, 9 May 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jul/08/david-davis-resigns-as-brexit-secretary-reports-say>

⁴³ The Guardian, 6 July 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jul/06/what-the-cabinet-has-agreed-at-chequers-brexit-meeting>

East Asia /South-East Asia

Korean Peninsula and Japan

- **Japan ready to share IAEA costs to check on N. Korea**

On July 6, 2018, Foreign Minister Taro Kono said that Tokyo is ready to shoulder part of the International Atomic Energy Agency's costs for inspecting North Korea toward the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the country. Foreign Minister Kono said about the Japanese plan in a meeting with IAEA Director-General Yukiya Amano at the organization's headquarters in Vienna. He said "Japan hopes to work with the IAEA for making maximum use" of the U.N. nuclear watchdog's know-how and experience in the denuclearization process.⁴⁴

- **Heavy rain in Western Japan kills more than 100 people**

The death toll from torrential rains in western Japan reached 104 on July 9, 2018, with some 50 others still missing after massive flooding and landslides destroyed homes and displaced tens of thousands. Heavy rain that began on July 5, mainly affected Hiroshima, Ehime, Okayama, Yamaguchi, Kyoto, Gifu, Shiga, Hyogo, Kochi, Fukuoka and Kagoshima prefectures.⁴⁵

- **Prime Minister Abe cancels plan to be first Japanese leader to visit Iran since 1978**

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has dropped his plan to visit Iran this summer, government sources said on July 3, 2018, as U.S. President Donald Trump has taken an increasingly tough line against Tehran. The government was making arrangements for Abe to visit the Iranian capital in mid-July and hold talks with President Hassan Rouhani. The trip would have made Abe the first Japanese leader to visit the country since Takeo Fukuda in 1978. The decision was made in light of Trump's push to isolate Iran and choke off its oil exports after he pulled the United States out of the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement in May.⁴⁶

- **North Korea tells Japan that No resolution on abduction issue unless sanctions lifted**

On July 5, 2018, North Korea said that it will not comply with Tokyo's request for a resolution of the issue of Japanese citizens abducted by the North decades ago unless Tokyo lifts unilateral economic sanctions. Pyongyang's demand to Japan was made during behind-the-scenes talks regarding the abductions of Japanese nationals in the

⁴⁴ "Japan ready to share IAEA costs to check on N. Korea", The Japan News, July 6, 2018, [the-japan-news.com/news/article/0004563780](https://www.japan-news.com/news/article/0004563780)

⁴⁵ "West Japan downpours and flooding so far leave 104 dead, over 50 missing", The Japan Times, July 9, 2018, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/07/09/national/west-japan-downpours-flooding-far-leave-88-dead-50-missing/#.WOLsPNIzaM8>

⁴⁶ "Abe scraps plan to be first Japanese leader to visit Iran since 1978 as Trump gets tough on Tehran", The Japan Times, July 3, 2018, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/07/03/national/politics-diplomacy/abe-scraps-plan-visit-iran-amid-trumps-tough-line/#.WOLsjtIzaM8>

1970s and 1980s, and is viewed possibly as a condition for resuming investigations into the fate of the victims.⁴⁷

- **Secretary of State Pompeo visits Pyongyang for nuclear talk**

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Pyongyang on July 6, 2018. Pompeo's latest trip to North Korea, his third in this year, comes with the crucial task of ironing out the Sentosa agreement, signed between Kim Jong-un and Trump on June 12 in Singapore, through which the North committed to work toward the "complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula."

On July 7, Pyongyang stated that the high-level meetings between its officials and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo "so regretful", threatening to renege on its agreement to denuclearize unless Washington refrains from pressuring the regime with "unilateral and gangster-like" demands. Pompeo, on the other hand, struck a positive tone while briefing reporters on the meetings, saying he had "very productive" and "good-faith" conversations with North Korean officials. "These are complicated issues, but we made progress on almost all of the central issues," said Pompeo. "Some places a great deal of progress, other places there's still more work to be done," he added.⁴⁸

(ASEAN, Malaysia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Phillipines)

- **Philippines Consultative Committee approves final draft on amendment to the Constitution**

The Consultative Committee (Concom) consisting of twenty two members, tasked to review the 1987 Constitution on July 3, approved the final draft of a proposed federal Charter. The draft Constitution was approved without any objection and it is expected to be submitted to President Duterte on July 9. Following President Rodrigo Duterte's endorsement it will be sent to Congress for consideration. The draft Charter seeks to create at least 18 federated regions corresponding to the 17 existing regions plus the Negros Island region. Some members have been debating whether to transform Metro Manila into a federated region. The Concom also proposed to prohibit a term extension of President Rodrigo Duterte but wanted to allow him to seek re-election under a federal state.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ "No resolution on abduction issue unless sanctions lifted, North Korea tells Japan", The Japan Times, July 6, 2018, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/07/06/national/politics-diplomacy/no-resolution-abduction-issue-unless-sanctions-lifted-north-korea-tells-japan/#.W0LsbdIzaM8>

⁴⁸ "Pyongyang was unhappy with Pompeo", The Korea JoongAng Daily, June 9, 2018,

koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3050357&cloc=joongangdaily|home|top

⁴⁹"Concom approves draft Charter without objections", *Phil Star Global*, July 3, 2018, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/07/03/1830192/concom-approves-draft-charter-without-objections>, accessed on July 3, 2018.

- **Malaysia hopes to revive relations with Mongolia**

Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, arrived in Mongolia's capital on July 3 for a three-day visit to attend Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR). Following the 2006 murder near Kuala Lumpur of a Mongolian citizen Altantuya Shaariibuu, bilateral relations between the two had turned cold, according to Malaysia's Ambassador to China who is concurrently accredited to Mongolia, Datuk Zainuddin Yahya. According to the Ambassador, Malaysia is keen to revive its bilateral ties with Mongolia and hoped that the visit of Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister to Mongolia would lead to the revival of the relationship. The Ambassador also hopes that the joint commission for the economic, scientific and technical agreement, which was signed between the two countries many years back, could be revived. After the signing of the agreement, Malaysia and Mongolia have never met and the first meeting never took place.⁵⁰

- **Indonesia's Vice President Jusuf Kalla not nominated to run with President Jokowi in 2019**

The Golkar party has confirmed that it will not nominate Vice President Jusuf Kalla to run in the 2019 presidential election along with the incumbent, President Jokowi. Further, a recent Constitutional Court ruling solidified the law that presidents and vice presidents can't serve more than two terms, making Vice President Kalla ineligible to stand for a second term as VP, having served as VP under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.⁵¹

- **US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visits Vietnam**

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made his first visit to Vietnam from 8-9 July. This was also his first visit to Southeast Asia, since taking office. He was received by Vietnam's Communist Party General Secretary Nguyễn Phú Trọng. During a brief meeting with Trọng on July 8, Pompeo praised Việt Nam's contributions to helping resolve regional issues. He welcomed the fruitful and diverse co-operation in various sectors between the two countries, saying the US wanted to strengthen its comprehensive partnership with Việt Nam. Regarding the history between the two nations, Pompeo said that the US would continue to help Việt Nam in its efforts to overcome the war's consequences. Secretary Pompeo told Trọng that the US backed the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to play a central role in the Indo-Pacific region, while also voicing support for freedom of navigation and the peaceful resolution of disputes in line with international law in the East Sea. Pompeo stated that the US is committed to accelerate the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula based on recent high-level agreements. The Vietnamese leader highly appreciated the secretary's visit,

⁵⁰“Malaysia hopes to revive relationship with Mongolia”, *Borneo Bulletin*, July 4, 2018, <https://borneobulletin.com.bn/malaysia-hopes-to-revive-relationship-with-mongolia/>, accessed on July 5, 2018.

⁵¹“Golkar says it won't nominate Kalla as VP in 2019 election”, *The Jakarta Post*, July 3, 2018, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/07/03/golkar-says-it-wont-nominate-kalla-as-vp-in-2019-election.html>, accessed on July 5, 2018.

saying it would help to promote the implementation of bilateral agreements, and help build deeper trust and understanding between the two countries.⁵²

Myanmar

- **Tatmadaw and govt using peace process for centralisation: CSOs**

Powerful actors in Myanmar's peace process aimed at ending decades of civil war have taken advantage of the negotiations to build up their land and natural resource holdings while undermining the building of a democratic federal union, a civil society group has said. The Karen Peace Support Network, which comprises more than 20 ethnic Karen civil society groups that operate along the Thai-Myanmar border, released a statement that accused Tatmadaw (military) representatives of blocking proposals for building a federal political system in the future. The accusation comes ahead of the scheduled third round of the 21st Century Panglong Conference to be held next week in Nay Pyi Taw. The government has invited to the conference armed ethnic groups that have not yet signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.⁵³

- **China, Myanmar Agree 15-Point MoU on Economic Corridor**

Chinese and Myanmar officials agreed a 15-point Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on building a China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, part of China's One Belt One Road Initiative, said U Min Zaw Oo, the director of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA). "The agreements have been reached. The 15-point MoU is ready," U Min Zaw Oo told *The Irrawaddy*. Under the MoU, the governments agree to collaborate on many sectors including basic infrastructure, construction, manufacturing, agriculture, transport, finance, human resources development, telecommunications, and research and technology in order to develop the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, U Min Zaw Oo said.⁵⁴

- **Myanmar arrests dozens of returning refugees: UN**

Myanmar has detained dozens of Rohingya refugees who have tried to return home, the UN human rights chief said questioning the sincerity of the government's purported repatriation programme. Myanmar has said it stands ready to welcome back some of the

⁵²"Pompeo meets Trọng on first visit to Vietnam", *Vietnam News*, July 9, 2018, <https://vietnamnews.vn/politics-laws/451384/pompeo-meets-trong-on-first-visit-to-viet-nam.html>, accessed on July 9, 2018.

⁵³ Tatmadaw and govt using peace process for centralisation: CSOs, 6th July 2018, <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/tatmadaw-and-govt-using-peace-process-centralisation-csos.html>

⁵⁴ China, Myanmar Agree 15-Point MoU on Economic Corridor, 6th July 2018, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/china-myanmar-agree-15-point-mou-economic-corridor.html>

700,000 Rohingya Muslims who have fled to Bangladesh since August, but so far fewer than 200 have been resettled in their homeland in northern Rakhine state.⁵⁵

Oceania

- **Australian Minister attends the Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction**

Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Concetta Fierravanti-Wells attended the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from 3 and 6 July 2018. Ministers and senior officials from around 45 Indo-Pacific countries participated to review the implementation of the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, a global blueprint for reducing disaster risk. “As the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction has noted, the Indo-Pacific is the world’s most disaster-prone region. This conference will strengthen our regional collaboration on disaster risk reduction,” said the Minister Fierravanti-Wells.⁵⁶ A statement released by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on 6 July 2018, announced that Australia will host the 2020 Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. “The 2020 conference will bring together government, business, researchers and communities to discuss action on reducing the humanitarian, economic and environmental costs of disasters in our region”.⁵⁷

- **Australia Welcomes enhanced investment opportunities in China**

Steven Ciobo, Australian Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, in a statement issued on 2 July, welcomed new Chinese Government reforms to remove barriers in investment in priority sectors, increasing opportunities for Australian investors in the world’s second largest economy. China’s Ministry of Commerce and National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) eased rules for foreign investment in a range of sectors. The move widens market access in sectors like finance, energy, resources, agriculture, professional services, transportation and infrastructure, opening up new investment opportunities for Australian investors and businesses. Australia and China have a broad trading relationship under the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA), these new reforms are expected to provide new impetus for Australian investment in China and help to drive Australia’s economic growth and job opportunities.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Myanmar arrests dozens of returning refugees: UN, 5th July 2018, <http://www.mizzima.com/news-domestic/myanmar-arrests-dozens-returning-refugees-un>.

⁵⁶ http://ministers.dfat.gov.au/fierravanti-wells/releases/Pages/2018/cf_mr_180702.aspx

⁵⁷ https://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2018/jb_mr_180706.aspx

⁵⁸ http://trademinister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2018/sc_mr_180702a.aspx

- **Nauru blocks ABC from Pacific forum over ‘bias and false reporting’**

The government of Nauru has blocked the Australia’s state broadcaster ABC from covering the Pacific Islands Forum in September this year, refusing to issue visas to ABC’s journalists.⁵⁹ A statement issued by the government of Nauru on July 2, blamed the ABC’s alleged “blatant interference in Nauru’s domestic politics during the 2016 election, harassment of and lack of respect towards our president in Australia, false and defamatory allegations against members of our government, and continued biased and false reporting about our country”. “No representative from the (ABC) will be granted a visa to enter Nauru under any circumstances” it said.⁶⁰ However, News Corp has rejected a boycott of the Pacific Islands Forum by the Australian federal press gallery, saying that the small pool of journalists would no longer cover the event if the ABC’s ban were not rescinded.⁶¹

- **PNG's Prime Minister visits Fiji**

The Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Peter O'Neill was welcomed in Fiji on 8 July, for his first official visit since being elected in 2012. Prime Minister O'Neill and a seven member delegation received a state welcome at Nausori Airport. The two day visit will include bilateral discussions. On his arrival he said that “We are great friends, we are family, we are Melanesian brothers, and it is a great honour, on behalf of our country, the great state of Papua New Guinea, to be here with you today”. He addressed the Fiji parliament on Monday, about the progress of preparations for this year's APEC summit in Port Moresby and extended invitation to Fijian Prime Minister Bainimarama to attend the APEC summit in November this year. Mr. O'Neill will also be the keynote speaker at a public lecture on “Pacific Regionalism”.⁶²

North America

Canada

- **Justin Trudeau to visit Canadian soldiers in Latvia before NATO summit**

The Canadian-led multinational NATO battle group was established in Latvia as the alliance’s response to Russia’s surprise annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its invasion of eastern Ukraine. Canada’s leadership of the battle group represents the country’s largest sustained military presence in Europe in over a decade. Trudeau’s visit will mark the first bilateral visit to Latvia by a Canadian prime minister. The announcement of the stop comes as Canada and other alliance leaders prepare to head to the NATO summit in Belgium — meetings that are already promising to elicit some fireworks thanks to Donald Trump. It also comes in the wake of a stormy end to the G7 meetings in Quebec,

⁵⁹<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/02/nauru-blocks-abc-from-pacific-forum-over-bias-and-false-reporting>

⁶⁰ <http://nauru-news.com/statement-republic-nauru-update-media-attending-sept-2018-pacific-islands-forum/>

⁶¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2018/jul/04/abc-ban-news-corp-rejects-media-boycott-of-nauru-forum>

⁶² <https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/361409/png-s-pm-visits-fiji>

when Trump called Canada's prime minister "dishonest and weak" and backed out of the final joint communique issued by the G7 leaders after hearing Trudeau's defiant comments over the tariff dispute.⁶³

- **Trudeau, NATO leaders gearing up for debate with Trump over defence spending**

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and other world leaders are gearing up for what already promises to be a lively debate on defence spending at the upcoming NATO summit in Brussels. The Prime Minister's Office said Trudeau is looking forward to meeting with the 28 other NATO leaders to discuss ways to reinforce peace and security among nations. "Throughout the summit's discussions and working sessions, the prime minister will reiterate Canada's commitment to playing an active role in the alliance, and a strong and constructive role in the world," said Trudeau's press secretary Eleanore Catenaro. The prospect of conflict among NATO leaders is already looming on the horizon, thanks to a series of pointed letters from U.S. President Donald Trump to leaders of several NATO allies, including Canada, calling on them to finally meet the alliance's defence spending targets.⁶⁴

The United States

- **Trump will focus on Russia's 'malign' activity at summits -US officials**

President Donald Trump will drill down on Russia's "malign activity" during summits with NATO allies and President Vladimir Putin, U.S. officials said, signaling a harder line against Moscow than Trump has traditionally taken. The U.S. president, whose 2016 election campaign is being probed for possible collusion with Russia, has said repeatedly he wants to have a good relationship with Washington's former Cold War foe, despite tensions between Russia and the West over Ukraine, Syria and alleged election meddling around the world. Trump, who is set to leave for Europe will hold meetings with NATO allies in Brussels, visit Britain, and then meet Putin in Helsinki for a one-on-one meeting on July 16. Trump told reporters last week he would press Putin on election meddling and also discuss Syria and Ukraine during their meeting. A Senate Intelligence Committee report released supported the conclusion of three U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia tried to help Donald Trump win the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Trump has denied that his campaign colluded with Russia and has repeated that Putin has denied involvement in the U.S. electoral process. European allies are also concerned about election meddling by Russia. But the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

⁶³ Teresa Wright, "Justin Trudeau to visit Canadian soldiers in Latvia before NATO summit," <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2018/07/03/justin-trudeau-to-visit-canadian-soldiers-in-latvia-before-nato-summit.html>, Accessed on 09 July 2018.

⁶⁴ Teresa Wright, "Trudeau, NATO leaders gearing up for debate with Trump over defence spending," <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2018/07/04/news/trudeau-nato-leaders-gearing-debate-trump-over-defence-spending>, Accessed on 09 July 2018.

summit is likely to be dominated by Trump's insistence that member nations step up and pay more for their joint defense.⁶⁵

- **North Korea accuses U.S. of making unilateral demands in nuclear talks**

The United States and North Korea gave starkly contrasting reports after two days of talks intended to firm up Pyongyang's promise to dismantle its nuclear weapons systems. The different descriptions of the meeting raised fears that disarmament negotiations may be doomed before they really begin. While Secretary of State Michael Pompeo claimed limited "progress" in "productive" meetings, North Korea expressed "regret" over the talks and accused the Trump administration of making unfair "unilateral" demands. Within hours of Pompeo's departure from the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, its foreign ministry issued a statement saying U.S. demands might lead to "a dangerous phase that might rattle our willingness for denuclearization that had been firm." Pompeo offered no details of his talks with North Korea's former spy chief Kim Yong Chol, nor did he outline any tangible gains. He flew to Tokyo without meeting North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, in contrast to his two previous trips to Pyongyang in the past three months. North Korea's negative reaction was not altogether surprising, and it could be part of that government's negotiating strategy. Experts agree Kim would never give up all of his weapons, and even to stop production of nuclear bombs and long-range missiles would require security guarantees from the U.S. to ensure the survival of his dynasty. When North Korea talks about denuclearization, it usually refers to the entire peninsula, meaning the U.S. military presence in South Korea also would have to be eliminated or curtailed.⁶⁶

- **India, US 2+2 dialogue likely in September, venue may be shifted to New Delhi**

The twice-deferred two-plus-two dialogue between the foreign and defence ministers of India and the US is now expected to take place in early September with the venue perhaps being shifted to New Delhi, with both sides seeking closure on a foundational communications, compatibility and security agreement (COMCASA) at the meeting.

The two delegations were to meet first on April 18 and senior Indian officials were on their way to Washington for preparatory talks when President Donald Trump fired secretary of state Rex Tillerson and gave his job to Mike Pompeo. Set to take place in Washington on July 6, the dialogue was again postponed because Pompeo had to visit North Korea. Indian and US diplomats told Hindustan Times that in the meetings between Indian foreign minister Sushma Swaraj and defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Pompeo and defense secretary Jim Mattis, the two sides would seek long-term linkages with a focus on the Afghanistan peace process, terrorism, and maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region. The US policy towards countries that do

⁶⁵ Jeff Mason, Arshad Mohammed, "Trump will focus on Russia's 'malign' activity at summits -US officials," <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-russia-summit/trump-will-focus-on-russias-malign-activity-at-summits-us-officials-idUSKBN1JV2AO>, Accessed on 09 July 2018.

⁶⁶ Tracy Wilkinson, "North Korea accuses U.S. of making unilateral demands in nuclear talks," <https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2018/07/07/north-korea-accuses-us-of-making-unilateral-demands-in-nuclear-talks.html> Accessed on 09 July 2018.

business with Iran and Russia (India buys oil from Iran and Russia is a key supplier of defence equipment) will also be discussed in detail so that there is broad convergence on the issue, the diplomats added. Hindustan Times learns that national security advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval may visit Washington next month to put things in motion for the September dialogue and clear the air on COMCASA.⁶⁷

- **Trump set to name supreme court pick in biggest decision of his presidency**

Donald Trump is set to make one of the most consequential decisions of his presidency when he names a new justice to sit on the US Supreme Court. The president's announcement could set the direction of the court for decades and light the fuse of an acrimonious political battle. The nominee's record will come under particular scrutiny for clues as to how he or she might vote in any future review of *Roe v Wade*, the landmark 1973 decision that guaranteed women's right to abortion. Trump's pick comes less than two weeks after Justice Anthony Kennedy, often the "swing vote" in the court's rulings, announced his retirement, and 18 months after the president won plaudits from conservatives for appointing Neil Gorsuch to the court. This followed a fiercely criticized but ultimately successful strategy by Senate Republicans to block Barack Obama's nominee, Merrick Garland, in 2016. The shortlist reportedly consists of federal appeals court judges Amy Coney Barrett, Thomas Hardiman, Brett Kavanaugh and Raymond Kethledge. The White House has been preparing information packages on all four, the Associated Press reported. Any one of them could tip the balance of the nine-person court toward conservatives and revisit landmark rulings on abortion access, racial discrimination, gay rights and other issues.⁶⁸

Mexico

- **Mexico's new leader wants a reboot with the US: How long will the honeymoon last?**

In the week after Mexico's historic election, in which a new political party founded by AMLO, the National Regeneration Movement or MORENA, triumphed over two parties that have governed Mexico in the past, the leftist politician has struck a polite tone toward President Donald Trump. In speeches and interviews he has declared his desire for friendship and mutual respect. There certainly are similarities between Trump and AMLO. Both are headstrong nationalists who tout being an outsider and feed off the adoration of massive crowds. Trump and Lopez Obrador had a 30-minute phone conversation after AMLO's victory. Trump described the conversation as "excellent." Lopez Obrador called it "respectful." How long the apparent honeymoon period will last is anyone's guess. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is scheduled to visit Mexico to meet Lopez Obrador and discuss immigration, commerce, security and development.

⁶⁷ Shisher Gupta, "India, US 2+2 dialogue likely in September, venue may be shifted to New Delhi," <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-us-2-2-dialogue-likely-in-september-venue-may-be-shifted-to-new-delhi/story-GgLkQABDyMAglE4trCyCgN.html>, Accessed on 09 July 2018.

⁶⁸ David Smith, "Trump set to name supreme court pick in biggest decision of his presidency," <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2018/jul/09/donald-trump-supreme-court-nomination>, Accessed on 09 July 2018.

AMLO is expected to take the presidential oath of office in December and officially begin the task of tackling a raft of volatile issues that have become ever more contentious and soured US-Mexico relations since Trump won the presidency.⁶⁹

- **Nafta deal possible, says Mexico's new economy minister**

Mexico's incoming economy minister says a Nafta deal by October is possible and believes a "Nafta-lite" — or, as a last resort, a bilateral trade deal with the US — would be better than no agreement at all. Graciela Márquez, the Harvard-trained economic historian named to Mexico's top trade job by President-elect Andrés Manuel López Obrador, thinks US president Donald Trump could sell a deal to his supporters as a sign that Mexico's strong new leader had bent to his will. Ms Márquez and the incoming government's designated chief negotiator, Jesús Seade, will join negotiations conducted by the government between now and taking office.⁷⁰

Latin America and the Caribbean

Brazil

- **Boeing-Embraer Deal Faces Political Backlash in Brazil**

Boeing Co.'s takeover of Embraer SA's commercial jetliner business marks the end of an era for one of Brazil's most successful companies, and the beginning of a potentially bitter political dispute. Coming ahead of Brazil's hotly contested October elections, the \$3.8 billion deal announced Thursday is shaping up to become a divisive campaign issue here, analysts said, evoking nationalist ire in much the same way that Harley-Davidson in the U.S. has recently been lambasted by President Donald Trump for shifting some operations overseas. The front-runner in Brazil's elections, Jair Bolsonaro, a right-wing former army captain, has largely backed the partnership with Boeing. Brazil, one of the most closed emerging-market economies, "cannot isolate itself from the world," he said in a recent television interview. But swaths of left-leaning politicians have opposed the takeover.⁷¹

- **Brazil judge rules to keep da Silva in jail after dispute**

The president of a Brazilian appeals court whose judges issued contradictory rulings on whether former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva should be freed ordered late in the day that he remain jailed. The duty judge on the Fourth Federal Regional Tribunal started off the day by ordering that da Silva be released. That set off a dramatic back-

⁶⁹ Leyla Santiago, "Mexico's new leader wants a reboot with the US: How long will the honeymoon last?," <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/07/07/americas/amlo-trump-us-mexico-relations/index.html> Accessed on 09 July 2018.

⁷⁰ Jude Webber, "Nafta deal possible, says Mexico's new economy minister," <https://www.ft.com/content/e1bc19e2-813b-11e8-bc55-50daf11b720d>, Accessed on 09 July 2018.

⁷¹ Samantha Pearson and Jeffrey Lewis, "Boeing-Embraer Deal Faces Political Backlash in Brazil," <https://www.wsj.com/articles/boeing-embraer-deal-faces-political-backlash-in-brazil-1530892008>, Accessed on 09 July 2018.

and-forth during the day as one judge refused to follow that order and another contradicted it. The dispute underscored how contentious da Silva's jailing has become in Brazil, where some see it as proof that no one is above the law and others feel the charges against the former president were trumped up to prevent him from running for office again. Judge Carlos Eduardo Thompson Flores Lenz intervened in an effort to resolve the dispute and ruled that da Silva should remain in jail. Two analysts said that should settle the matter — at least for the moment. The defense can always appeal to a higher court, and the chaos of Sunday showed that Brazilian law is open to interpretation and maneuvering.⁷²

Chile

- **Vietnam, Chile legislative bodies expected to further boost ties**

Deputy Prime Minister Vuong Dinh Hue has said Vietnam and Chile's legislative bodies should enhance exchanges and experience sharing in law-building. Deputy PM Hue expressed the wish while meeting with President of the Senate Carlos Montes Cisternas and president of the Chile-Vietnam friendship parliamentary group at Chile's lower house Karol Cariola on July 5 as part of his visit to Chile. He informed the hosts of the political, social and economic situation in Vietnam, and thanked Chile for supporting the Southeast Asian country over the years. He expressed his hope that the National Congress of Chile will soon ratify the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which both Vietnam and Chile are members of.⁷³

- **President of Chile Keen on Negotiating Free-trade agreement with CARICOM**

President of the Republic of Chile, His Excellency Sebastián Piñera, has expressed interest in entering into negotiations on a free trade-agreement with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Mr. Piñera said the Chilean Government, which already has free-trade agreements with more than 70 countries in the world, has been looking forward to starting this process "for a long period of time". He was addressing the third plenary session at the 39th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM on Friday (July 6), at the Montego Bay Convention Centre, in St. James. Jamaica is already benefiting from Chile's assistance in building capacity in the areas of trade policy and trade promotion. This is being facilitated under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for technical cooperation between the Export Promotion Bureau (ProChile) and Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO), which was signed last year.

⁷² Sarah Diloranzo, "Brazil judge rules to keep da Silva in jail after dispute," https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/brazil-judge-rules-to-keep-da-silva-in-jail-after-dispute/2018/07/08/69e6d18a-830e-11e8-9e06-4db52ac42e05_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.b6ec82edf374, Accessed on 09 July 2018.

⁷³ ---, "Vietnam, Chile legislative bodies expected to further boost ties," <http://en.nhandan.org.vn/politics/item/6356702-vietnam-chile-legislative-bodies-expected-to-further-boost-ties.html>, Accessed on 09 July 2018.

Mr. Piñera explained that under the agreement, both countries will organise an annual plan that will include training programmes and also aims to increase bilateral trade.⁷⁴

Russia

- **Russia and India**

Russia on 6 July has offered to jointly construct and develop a nuclear submarine in India, in a proposal that could provide a big relief to the funds-starved Indian Navy. The proposal could become an alternative to the tender for the purchase of six new diesel-electric submarines which will cost the Indian Navy approximately \$10 billion. The Russian side proposed the transfer of all intellectual property for the construction of a prototype and design [submarine], which means that there are also no restrictions on the number of submarines that can be built for this project. Under the joint development project proposal, both countries will design and develop a prototype at cost of under \$200 million thereafter the technical know-how and related documents will be transferred to an Indian shipyard.⁷⁵

- **Russia and US**

On 29 July, US President Donald Trump speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One, was asked if Washington would accept Russia's claim to Crimea. The president laconically replied: *"We're going to have to see."* He said that he will talk to Russian President Vladimir Putin on Ukraine, Syria and the 2016 election meddling. The meeting between Putin and Trump, their first held outside of a multilateral summit, is set for July 16 in Helsinki, Finland. *"A full range of issues"* are set to be discussed by the leaders when they finally get together, including arms control, alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 US presidential election, and Moscow rejoining the G8.⁷⁶

On 6 July, Senator Konstantin Kosachev, head of the Russian Upper House Committee for International Relations has stated that the recent visit of US Congressmen to Moscow had "thawed" the hitherto frozen parliamentary dialogue between the two nations. A delegation of US lawmakers headed by Senator Richard Shelby visited Moscow at the beginning of this month to make preparations for the upcoming meeting between President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Helsinki. During the visit Senator Shelby held talks with Russian Foreign Minister

⁷⁴ Alecia Smith, "President of Chile Keen on Negotiating Free-trade agreement with CARICOM," <https://jis.gov.jm/president-of-chile-keen-on-negotiating-free-trade-agreement-with-caricom/>, Accessed on 09 July 2018.

⁷⁵ "Russia Offers Cost-Effective Proposal to Build Next-Gen Submarines in India", *Sputnik*, July 6, 2018. <https://sputniknews.com/asia/201807061066104581-russia-offers-submarines-proposal-india/> Accessed on July 9, 2018.

⁷⁶ "Trump leaves door open when asked about Crimea recognition", *RT*, July 1, 2018. <https://www.rt.com/news/431408-trump-crimea-russia-hint/> Accessed on July 9, 2018.

Sergey Lavrov and after the meeting told reporters that, in his opinion, the United States should see Russia as a superpower and seek dialogue.⁷⁷

On 8 July, the US Senator Ron Johnson, who visited Russia with a delegation of US congressmen on June 30 - July 5 said that the economic sanctions, imposed on Russia by the United States, are not working. At the same time, the senator said he does not favor lifting sanctions, but suggests revising them. According to Johnson, the Congress over-reacted to Russia's alleged 2016 election interference, by passing the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) last summer, which tied Trump's hands with mandatory sanctions.⁷⁸

South Asia

Afghanistan

- **Afghan peace process was the focus of Islamabad conference**

Regional Peace Institute in collaboration with the Royal Danish Defence College organised two day conference in Islamabad, capital of Pakistan on 30 June-1July 2018. At the conference, there were delegates from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Denmark. Prominent dignitaries from Afghanistan such as Habiba Surabi, deputy head of the High Peace Council (HPC), De. Anwar-ul-Haq Ahadi, head of the Afghan Millat Party, Zia-ul-Haq Amarkhel, head of the National Solidarity Association, Lawmaker Hellai Ershad and Civil Society Activist Entezar Khadem actively took part at the conference. Entezar Khadem viewed that cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan should be the urgent need of hour. He said, "For the first time the spirit of cooperation was at its high which was never noticed in the previous conferences of this nature". The conference pledged to enhance cooperation between "the spy networks of Afghanistan and Pakistan".⁷⁹

- **Afghan Air Strike on Taliban in Jawand district, Badgis Province**

Afghan Air Force carried out airstrike targeting the Taliban hideouts in the Di Garm village, located in Jawand district, largest district of Badghis province. In the airstrike, 2 Taliban fighters were killed and 18 others were wounded. It was reported that local leaders had requested Afghan National Army to look after the situation. Ahmad Fahim Qayem, the police chief of Badghis said, "I visited Jawand district. The people of this

⁷⁷"Thaw' in Russian-US parliamentary relations – senior senator", *RT*, July 6, 2018.

<https://www.rt.com/politics/431884-russia-us-parliamentary-dialogue/> Accessed on July 9, 2018.

⁷⁸"US sanctions against Russia not working — US senator Johnson", *TASS*, July 8, 2018.

<http://tass.com/world/1012340> Accessed on July 9, 2018.

⁷⁹ Pajhwok Afghan News, 30 June 2018,

<https://www.pajhwok.com/en/2018/06/30/islamabad-conference-discuss-afghan-peace-process>

district fully cooperated with government forces. I saw good coordination in the district. Badghis residents are cooperating well with security forces”⁸⁰.

- **Indian Prime Minister condemns the deadly attack in Jalalabad city**

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi strongly condemned the suicide bombing, targeting a convoy of Sikhs and Hindu in the eastern city of Jalalabad on 2 July 2018. The attack occurred when the convoy went to meet the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, ““We strongly condemn the terror attacks in Afghanistan yesterday. They are an attack on Afghanistan's multicultural fabric”. The attack was carried out by Islamic State (IS) that killed only Sikh candidate for the upcoming parliamentary elections along with 19 other people.⁸¹

- **Afghan-Sino Relations Stressed Under New China’s Foreign Policy**

A statement released by National Security Council (NSC) on 2 July 2018 held that Chinese Ambassador to Afghanistan Liu Jinsong met Hanif Atmar, Afghanistan’s National Security Advisor. Welcoming ceasefire during Eid-ul-Fitr, both leaders discussed measures to enhance bilateral relation, counter-terrorism efforts along with regional cooperation and Afghan led and owned peace process. The Ambassador also had a brief meeting with Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani⁸².

- **Ukraine’s decision to Increase Number of Troops in Afghanistan**

On 3 July 2018, Oleksiy Henchev , head of the Directorate for Cooperation with NATO of the Government Office for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine assured that Ukraine would increase its servicemen for Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, conducted by the NATO. Oleksiy Henchev emphasized that the inclusion of more soldiers in NATO’s Resolute Support in Afghanistan would provide them opportunity to strengthen their effectiveness in combating forces in Eastern Europe.⁸³

- **Foreign Troops on Afghan Soil ‘Main Issue’: Taliban**

On 6 July 2018, the Taliban openly rejected the government’s announcement that Taliban members wanted to have direct talks with the Afghan authorities. Earlier the High Peace Council secretary Dr. Akram Khyalwaj claimed that in the upcoming Ulema, international conference to be held in Saudi Arabia, Taliban would join intra-Afghan peace talks. However, Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesman of Taliban viewing presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan as “the mother of all problems” said that the

⁸⁰ Daily Outlook Afghanistan, 1 July 2018, http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21238

⁸¹ Khaama Press, 2 July 2018, <https://www.khaama.com/indian-prime-minister-condemns-the-deadly-attack-in-jalalabad-city-05477/>

⁸² Daily Outlook Afghanistan, 4 July 2018, http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21271

⁸³ Tolo News, 4 July 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/ukraine-increase-number-troops-afghanistan>.

statement of High Peace Council secretary was false and claimed it to mislead the minds of people.⁸⁴

- **Afghan security forces killed 16 Taliban members in Balkh province**

On 8 July 2018, Afghan security forces killed 16 Taliban members in Balkh province. Gen. Mohammad Akram Sami claimed that Afghan security forces launched the operation known as Walid 9 in five villages like Shorabak, Arab-Mazari, Jar Qala, Ayen Qala and Alizaye located in Chamtal district and cleared them of insurgents. Taliban for past few days tried to seize the control of areas of Sara-e-Pul, Jawzjan and Balkh provinces. Meanwhile, Afghan army is committed to defeat the Taliban member. According to Gen. Jalaluddin Yaftali, a commander from 209 Shaheen Military Corps, "Currently the army is continuing the operation and we are working on a plan to develop this operation and also move it to Alizaye and Chahar Bolak districts and also to other areas where the enemies are active. we will follow the insurgents".⁸⁵

Bangladesh

- **ADB Okays \$100m for Rohingyas**

The Asian Development Bank has approved a grant assistance of \$100 million—the first of an envisaged package totalling \$ 200m to help Bangladesh develop basic infrastructure and services for Rohingyas. "Given the scale of the humanitarian needs, we are coordinating closely and promptly with World Bank and other development partners to support the government in addressing the crisis in Cox's Bazar," ADB President Takehiko Nakao said yesterday (July 6).⁸⁶

- **No inclusive polls minus BNP: Moudud**

The BNP's senior leader Moudud Ahmed on Saturday (July 7) asked the government to reach an understating with the main opposition party for holding a participatory general election. He made the call two days after Awami League Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had told her party leaders that the next general elections would be inclusive and that the BNP would contest there. "An inclusive election is not possible without BNP's participation. So, the government must reach a compromise with BNP," Moudud said.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Daily Outlook Afghanistan, 7 July 2018, http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21287.

⁸⁵ Tolo News, 8 July 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/taliban-suffers-heavy-casualty-toll%C2%A0-balkh-operation>

⁸⁶ "ADB okays \$100m for Rohingyas," *Daily Star*, July 7, 2018, <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/adb-okays-100m-rohingyas-1601332>, accessed on July 7, 2018.

⁸⁷ "No inclusive polls minus BNP: Moudud," *Prothom Alo*, July 7, 2018, <http://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/news/179266/No-inclusive-polls-minus-BNP-Moudud>, accessed on July 7, 2018.

- **Dhaka-Delhi Ties: Teesta deal no longer an irritant**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Political Adviser HT Imam yesterday (July 7) expressed hope that Bangladesh and India would sign the Teesta water-sharing agreement soon. The matter was no longer an irritant in the relations of the two countries or the two governments, he said at a programme in New Delhi yesterday (July 7). Imam, however, warned that the BNP would try to make an issue of it in the upcoming national polls likely in December.⁸⁸

- **National polls will be harder than ever**

Warning that the next national elections would be tough, Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday (July 7) asked her party's grassroots leaders to resolve their internal conflicts ahead of the polls slated for December. AL leaders and workers have no scope for negligence in any constituency. It could lead to defeats and hurt government formation, UNB and BSS reported her as saying.⁸⁹

- **China urges Myanmar to start repatriation**

China, as part of its three-phase steps, has urged Myanmar to start repatriation of Rohingyas as soon as possible saying it attaches great importance to Rohingya crisis. "We've urged Myanmar both bilaterally and multilaterally on various occasions for early repatriation of Rohingyas. We've also urged them to reach some visible outcome as soon as possible," Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Zhang Zuo said while responding to UNB questions yesterday (July 8).⁹⁰

नेपाल

प्रदर्शन पर प्रतिबन्ध असंवैधानिक:

नेपाल की सिविल सोसायटी और भूतपूर्व न्यायाधीश सुशीला कार्की ने कहा कि सरकार के खिलाफ शांतिपूर्ण ढंग से प्रदर्शन करने पर प्रतिबन्ध नहीं लगाया जा सकता, यह एक असंवैधानिक कृत्य है. सरकार ने काठमांडू में केवल सात जगह पर विरोध प्रदर्शन के लिए अनुमति दी है जिसके खिलाफ कार्की प्रदर्शन कर रही है.⁹¹

⁸⁸ "Dhaka-Delhi Ties: Teesta deal no longer an irritant," *Daily Star*, July 8, 2018, <https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/dhaka-delhi-ties-teesta-deal-no-longer-irritant-1601887>, accessed on July 8, 2018.

⁸⁹ "National polls will be harder than ever," *Daily Star*, July 8, 2018, <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/national-polls-will-be-harder-ever-1601842>, accessed on July 8, 2018.

⁹⁰ "China urges Myanmar to start repatriation," *The Independent*, July 9, 2018, <http://www.theindependentbd.com/post/157106>, accessed on July 9, 2018.

⁹¹ "Protest Ban 'unconstitutional'", *The Kathmandu Post*, 4 July 2018, <https://epaper-beta.ekantipur.com/kathmandupost/2018-07-04>

चिकित्सा शिक्षा बिल संसद ने वापस लिया:

डॉ गोविदा के सी पिछले नौ दिनों से चिकित्सा शिक्षा बिल के विरोध में मुख्य विपक्षी दल नेपाली कांग्रेस के साथ मिलकर सरकार का विरोध कर रहे हैं क्योंकि इसमें कुछ प्रावधान विवादास्पद हैं। जिसके चलते बाद में संसद ने इस बिल को वापस ले लिया है। इस बिल से नेपाल साम्यवादी दल और इससे जुड़े व्यावसायिक प्रतिष्ठान मेडिकल कालेज चला रहे थे और वह भी बिना किसी अहर्ता के.⁹²

देउबा सरकार की नियुक्तियों को रद्द करने की प्रक्रिया प्रारंभ:

वर्तमान सरकार उन लोगों की सेवा समाप्ति के पत्र जारी कर रही है जिनकी नियुक्ति शेर बहादुर देउबा के काल में हुई थी। रविवार को राष्ट्रीय पुनर्निर्माण प्राधिकरण के मुख्य निष्पादन अधिकारी युबराज भुशाल को हटाने के पत्र जारी कर दिए। भुशाल का कहना है कि भूकंप के बाद हुए निर्माण कार्य में उनका उल्लेखनीय योगदान होने के बावजूद भी उनको इस पद से वर्तमान सरकार ने हटा दिया.⁹³

हमारे निर्णयों को उल्टाकर मौजूदा सरकार ने कम्युनिस्ट तानाशाही दिखाई है: सभापति देउबा नेपाली कांग्रेस के सभापति शेरबहादुर देउबा ने कहा – “हमारे नेतृत्व वाली सरकार के निर्णयों को उल्टाकर मौजूदा सरकार ने कम्युनिस्ट तानाशाही दिखाई है।” नेपाल प्रेस यूनियन रामेछाप द्वारा जिलामुख्यालय मंथली में बुलाए गए प्रेस मीट में सभापति देउबा ने ये बात कही। इस बात का जिक्र करते हुए कि कांग्रेस रचनात्मक प्रतिपक्ष की भूमिका निभाएगी, उन्होंने सरकार के इस कदम के विरुद्ध अदालत, संसद में आवाज उठाने के साथ साथ सड़क आंदोलन तक करने की चेतावनी दी.⁹⁴

Pakistan

• Pakistan US and Afghanistan

Pakistan and the United States on July 3rd agreed to remain engaged for peace in Afghanistan, in a meeting between US Deputy Assistant Secretary at the State Department's Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Ambassador Alice Wells (who was on a 3 day visit) and Army Chief Gen Qamar Bajwa at the General Headquarters in Islamabad. Both also agreed on continued engagement at multiple levels. Ambassador Wells discussed Pakistan's stated commitment to eliminating all terrorist groups present within its borders.⁹⁵ It can be noted that while giving an interview to GeoNews in Dallas on July 8th, the newly-appointed Ambassador of Pakistan to the US, Ali Jahangir Siddiqui

⁹² Ashok Dahal, "Medical Education Bill with disputed provisions back in parliament", My Republica, 7 July 2018, <http://e.myrepublica.com/epaper/src/epaper.php?id=2940>

⁹³ "Government starts giving termination letters to Deuba's political appointee", My Republica, 9 July 2018, <http://e.myrepublica.com/epaper/src/epaper.php?id=2942#page/2>

⁹⁴ "हमारे निर्णयों को उल्टाकर मौजूदा सरकार ने कम्युनिस्ट तानाशाही दिखाई है: सभापति देउबा", हिमालिनी, 8 जुलाई, 2018, <http://www.himalini.com/>

⁹⁵ Baqir Sajjad Syed, "Pakistan, US to work towards peace in Afghanistan", Dawn, July 4, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1417812> as accessed on July 8, 2018

said that both Pakistan and US are aware of the issues surrounding bilateral ties. The Pakistani envoy said the two countries are working towards the restoration of their bilateral relationship.⁹⁶

- **Concerns over CPEC**

Chinese officials and investment companies have expressed concern over the 'hurdles' in the initiation of development projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and called for their removal forthwith while speaking at a roundtable conference on development of Balochistan on July 4th, jointly organised by the provincial government and the Balochistan Economic Forum (BEF). Chinese speakers said that they were facing difficulties to get NOCs from different government departments. Chinese Consul General Wang Shung said Balochistan was on Chinese government's priority for developing energy sector and building infrastructure.⁹⁷

- **Pakistan Navy Exercise**

The 109th midshipmen and 18th SSC course commissioning parade, comprising 45 Pakistani and 43 midshipmen from friendly countries as well as 54 cadets of short service commission (SSC) course, was held at Pakistan Naval Academy PNS Rahbar on July 7th. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi highlighted that in order to enhance spiritual combat power of the men, for the first time, 32 religious and motivation officers (RMOs) had been commissioned as part of the SSC course. The naval chief also mentioned the strategic shift from erstwhile participation of Pakistan Navy in the Combined Task Forces 150 and 151 under the auspices of the Combined Maritime Forces to Regional Maritime Security Patrols.⁹⁸

- **UN, Pakistan and Iran**

The United Nations has appointed Javaid Rehman, a British-Pakistani legal scholar, as UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran. Mr Rehman succeeds Asma Jahangir who passed away in February. Mr Rehman's appointment was announced on July 7th during the 38th session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). The UN special rapporteur can hold office for six years at most. Tehran has always rejected reports of the rapporteurs on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran as biased, politically motivated and invalid.⁹⁹

⁹⁶Raja Zahid Akhtar Khanzada, "Pakistan, US working towards restoration of ties: Ambassador Ali Jahangir", *Geo News*, July 8, 2018, <https://www.geo.tv/latest/202315-pakistan-us-working-towards-restoration-of-ties-ambassador-ali-jahangir> as accessed on July 8, 2018

⁹⁷Saleem Shahid, "Plea for removal of obstacles in CPEC way", *Dawn*, July 5, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1418074/plea-for-removal-of-obstacles-in-cpec-way> as accessed on July 8, 2018

⁹⁸Shazia Hasan, "In a first, Navy inducts 32 religious, motivation officers", *Dawn*, July 8, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1418727/in-a-first-navy-inducts-32-religious-motivation-officers> as accessed on July 8, 2018

⁹⁹Anwar Iqbal, "UN names Pakistani as rapporteur on HR situation in Iran", *Dawn*, July 9, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1418904/un-names-pakistani-as-rapporteur-on-hr-situation-in-iran> as accessed on July 9, 2018

Sri Lanka

- **India allocates USD 56 mn to discourage poaching in SL**

As a part of efforts to keep Tamil Nadu fishermen from poaching in Sri Lanka's territorial waters, the Indian government has allocated US \$ 56 million to dismantle bottom trawling boats and replacing them with new deep sea liners. This has been done consequent to talks with the Sri Lankan government on the need to discourage Tamil Nadu fishermen from unlawfully engaging in fishing in the Palk Strait. According to sources, 513 applications had been received by the Indian Government as of March 31 from owners of bottom trawlers who wished to replace them with deep sea liners¹⁰⁰.

- **Douglas ready to push forward 13-A if elected North CM**

Former militant and Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) leader Douglas Devananda, said he will ensure the full implementation of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution if he is elected Chief Minister of the Northern Province at the next Provincial Council elections. "Unlike others, I can work well with the Centre and implement relevant policies on the ground and "will also strengthen ties with India, and ensure the full implementation of the 13th Amendment," he said.¹⁰¹

- **Sampanthan Laments Lack of Political Will To Enact New Constitution**

Leader of the Opposition and the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) R Sampanthan told the United Nation's Resident Coordinator Terrence D Jones on 3rd July that despite a lot of work done regarding a new constitution since 1998, political will and courage is lacking 'to take it further'. Sampanthan had highlighted the need to adopt a new constitution 'to ensure the non-recurrence of the past' and had flagged key concerns of Tamil people when Jones was making a courtesy call on him in Parliament according to a media statement released by the TNA.¹⁰²

- **China never pressurised us to handover H'tota port: PM**

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe refuted claims made by the recent New York Times story that the present government was under heavy pressure from China to handover the Hambantota Port to them after it was struggling to settle the debts borrowed during the previous regime. Mr Wickremesinghe refuted claims made by the New York Times report during a special statement he made in Parliament. "I must say that the Chinese government never pressurised Sri Lanka on this matter. What the

¹⁰⁰ India allocates USD 56 mn to discourage poaching in SL, 9 July 2018, <http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/India-allocates-USD-mn-to-discourage-poaching-in-SL-152414.html>.

¹⁰¹ Douglas ready to push forward 13-A if elected North CM, 7th July 2018, <http://colombogazette.com/2018/07/07/douglas-ready-to-push-forward-13-a-if-elected-north-cm/>

¹⁰² Sampanthan Laments Lack Of Political Will To Enact New Constitution, 4th July 2018, <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/sampanthan-laments-lack-of-political-will-to-enact-new-constitution/>

Chinese government wanted us to do was to get proposals from Chinese companies to come up with proposals to run the Port initially”.¹⁰³

Indian Ocean Region

• India- China Maritime Dialogue

India and China will hold a bilateral maritime dialogue soon. Referring sources, India Today mentioned that India is planning to discuss with China all aspects of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue on June 01, 2018, including steps to maintain rule based order in the Indian Ocean.¹⁰⁴ "Our effort is to work out how we can get coherence in the Indo-Pacific community about the Indo-Pacific as a concept,"¹⁰⁵ sources said to India Today.¹⁰⁶ This is not a first time India and China are organising bilateral maritime meeting, the first meeting was held in 2016 which covered issues related with maritime security and prospect of cooperation. This time, during the dialogue, India is planning to propose the acceptance of the concept Indo- Pacific.¹⁰⁷ China has been reluctant to accept the concept Indo- Pacific.

• BMP5 and Global Counter Piracy Guidance

EU NAVFOR welcomes the announcement of the publication of BMP5 and the launch of Global Counter Piracy Guidance. Press release of European Union Naval Force Somalia read "these documents have and will continue to contribute to the security and safety of merchant shipping transiting the High Risk Areas off the Horn of Africa"¹⁰⁸. "BMP5 continues to strongly encourage shipping operators to register their transits with EU NAVFOR MSCHOA and to follow the self-protection advice contained within BMP5,"¹⁰⁹ the press release mentioned.

• Kenyan Government Revamps Committee Tasked with Development of Blue Economy

The Kenyan Government has reconstituted a committee to find ways to exploit the potential of the blue economy.¹¹⁰ The committee will advise president on the way

¹⁰³ China never pressurised us to handover H'tota port: PM, 5th July 2018, <http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/China-never-pressurised-us-to-handover-H-tota-port-PM-152285.html>

¹⁰⁴ India, China maritime dialogue soon, say government sources, July 04, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/india-china-maritime-dialogue-soon-say-govt-sources-1277261-2018-07-04> (Accessed on 08 July, 2018)

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Somalia: Maritime Industry Releases BMP5 and Global Counter Piracy Guidance, 28 June 2018, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201806290472.html> (Accessed on 08 July, 2018)

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Government revamps committee tasked with revamping blue economy, July 03, 2018 <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/article/2001286448/state-reconstitutes-team-to-manage-blue-economy> (Accessed on 08 July, 2018)

forward of development of blue economy in the country.¹¹¹ According to a media report, the committee will have a new chairman to oversee the eight-member team.¹¹² According to the Gazette notice signed by Head of Public Service Joseph Kinyua, Chief of Defence Forces Samson Mwathethe has been appointed to head the committee. Coordinating and overseeing the implementation of programmes to develop the blue economy, and preparing and submitting monthly reports to the President on the progress of the sub-sectors, are key functions of the committee.¹¹³

- **Russia and India to Jointly Design, Build Submarines**

According to a media report, Russia has offered to India "a joint submarine design and construction proposal to build on the technology transfer acquired while building the nuclear fleet."¹¹⁴ The proposal also promises to reduce the cost of Navy's next-generation vessel plan.¹¹⁵ As the Economic Times reported, perhaps the proposals for the same have already been discussed during the Sochi Summit in May 2018.¹¹⁶ "The Russian side has offered a transfer of all intellectual property for the design and prototype construction. This will mean that there are also no limits to the number of submarines that can be built under the project...",¹¹⁷ the Economic times quoted the expert opinion.

Maldives

- **Dr. Shaheem appointed as the running mate of President Yameen**

Chancellor of Islamic University of Maldives, Dr. Shaheem Ali Saeed has been appointed as the running mate of President Yameen in the upcoming presidential elections. President Yameen informed of his decision to appoint Dr. Shaheem in a council meeting of PPM. Dr. Shaheem is an Islamic Scholar and he was appointed as a state minister at Ministry of Islamic Affairs in 2008. He resigned from MDP government due to various challenges he faced as a minister. After that he became the Islamic Minister at Dr. Waheed's administration.¹¹⁸

- **Return to democratic path' before polls, India urges Maldives**

India urged "credible restoration of the political process" before September's presidential election. India has expressed concern over the announcement of the Maldives presidential election with the country's parliament and judiciary "not allowed

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Russia offers to jointly design, build submarines, July 06, 2018, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/russia-offers-to-jointly-design-build-submarines/articleshow/64877908.cms> (Accessed on 08 July, 2018)

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Dr. Shaheem appointed as the running mate of President Yameen, 8 July 2018, <http://miadhu.mv/article/en/10538>

to function in a free and transparent manner.” “We have urged the government of Maldives to return to the path of democracy and ensure credible restoration of the political process and the rule of law before the elections are conducted,” Raveesh Kumar, spokesman of the external affairs ministry, told reporters on 5th of July. “It is important that a conducive atmosphere is created for holding free and fair elections in the Maldives.”¹¹⁹

- **JP opposes key MDP manifesto pledges**

The Jumhooree Party has opposed coalition partner the Maldivian Democratic Party’s proposals to appoint foreign judges and shift to a parliamentary system. In an open letter on 4th of July, exiled JP leader Gasim Ibrahim asked the opposition coalition to accept 11 nationalistic pledges proposed by the party. After weeks of bickering over a single candidate, the coalition agreed last Friday to field an MDP presidential candidate with a JP running mate. The MDP’s national congress appointed Ibrahim Mohamed Solih ‘Ibu’ as its candidate and the JP is due to announce the vice presidential candidate on July 10.¹²⁰

- **MDP calls to form an independent Elections Commission**

MDP has stated that the current Elections Commission does not have the capacity and the intention to conduct a free and a fair election. MDP further called to establish an independent Election Commission to ensure the integrity of the elections. A statement by the party states that to ensure the fairness of the elections, the Elections Commission should publish a voters list with photos and ID card details of the voters. The statement further stated that MDP filed complaints to the Commission because they have not included any of these details in the voters list.¹²¹

- **MDP pledges to ban foreign vessels from Maldives fishing**

Foreign vessels will be banned from fishing in Maldivian waters, one of the election pledges from the main opposition Maldivian Democratic Party in its manifesto. The foreign boat ban is part of the MDP’s ‘blue economy’ pledge, which aims to create an environmentally friendly economic strategy that will at the same time increase household income.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Return to democratic path’ before polls, India urges Maldives, 6th July 2018, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/return-to-democratic-path-before-polls-india-urges-maldives-139209>

¹²⁰ JP opposes key MDP manifesto pledges, 5th July 2018, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/jp-opposes-key-mdp-manifesto-pledges-139184>

¹²¹ MDP calls to form an independent Elections Commission, 6th July 2018, <http://miadhu.mv/article/en/10529>

¹²² MDP pledges to ban foreign vessels from Maldives fishing, 2nd July 2018, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/mdp-pledges-to-ban-foreign-vessels-from-maldives-fishing-139103>

West Asia

Iraq and GCC

- **Sadr calls all parties to cut talks over government formation with US, neighbouring countries¹²³**

Muqtada al-Sadr, leader of Sairoon, in a tweet on Sunday (July 8) called on all Iraqi political parties to distance themselves from sectarian and ethnic-based coalitions, expressing his readiness to cooperate with the parties. “The political parties have to cut talks regarding the formation of coalitions [and government] with the US and neighboring countries. This is an internal Iraqi affair only,” he said. Instead of relying on foreign countries for the formation of a government, the political parties should rely on other nations to improve electricity, water, health, and education services, Sadr stated. Advising the political parties, Sadr called all sides to distance themselves from sectarian and ethnic-based coalitions, adding he was “personally against any Sunni or Shia or Kurdish entrench” in the formation of the government. “I am ready to cooperate to form a coalition away from partisan, sectarian, and ethnic divisions,” Sadr added. On June 23, Iraq’s parliamentary election winner Sadr and current Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced that their political blocs would form an alliance.

- **Barzani-led KDP hints at aims to take Iraq’s presidential post¹²⁴**

The Kurdistan Region’s leading party suggested on Saturday (July 7) that it might try to attain the post of Iraqi president, held by PUK, the rival Kurdish party, for nearly 13 years. “The KDP is the most deserving [Kurdish] party for the presidency, because of the number of seats it has won in comparison to its main rival,” Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Spokesperson Mahmoud Mohammad said, referring to parliament seats secured in Iraq’s May 12 parliamentary election. Widespread claims of fraud have led to a decision to hold a partial manual recount of votes, making it unclear if the current number of seats now claimed by winning parties will remain the same. The KDP, led by Masoud Barzani, is the fifth largest party in Iraq and the first in the Kurdistan Region, according to the disputed results released by the nation’s electoral commission. Support from the Kurdish bloc in parliament will be crucial to gaining the seats needed for any alliance attempting to garner sufficient support to successfully form a cabinet. The Kurds have played a pivotal role in naming former prime ministers.

According to the system of power-sharing in Iraq, the Prime Minister’s post is held by a member of the Shia community, a Sunni Iraqi is speaker of parliament, and a Kurd holds the presidency, a largely ceremonial position.

¹²³ <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/5c2dd0a3-829b-4b29-a946-7e6bd30a2b60>

¹²⁴ <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/88920e37-371a-4298-9f11-8a248caba078>

- **‘No decision’ on Russian arms deal, Qatar Emir says¹²⁵**

The emir of Qatar spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday about buying an advanced air defence system, but no decision has been taken. News that Qatar might purchase the S-400 missile system has alarmed its neighbour Saudi Arabia, which, along with Bahrain, the UAE and Egypt, launched a land, air and naval blockade of the gas-rich island-nation. The quartet of Arab countries accuse Qatar of supporting terrorism and developing close ties with regional rival Iran, a charge Doha strongly denies. French newspaper *Le Monde* reported last month that Saudi Arabia had even written to France warning that it might take military action if Qatar went ahead with the purchase.

“I don't want to go into details,” Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani said at a press conference in Paris on Friday (July 6) after talks with President Emmanuel Macron when asked about the issue. “There is no agreement. It's true that we discussed it, we talked about it.”

The S-400 is the latest generation surface-to-air defence system developed by Russia and is considered by NATO countries to pose a threat to their aircraft. Russia has deployed it in Syria and is also in talks to sell it to NATO member Turkey, which has alarmed the US.

- **UAE extends compulsory military service to sixteen months¹²⁶**

Compulsory military service for young Emiratis holding a secondary high school certificate and above has been extended to 16 months, the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the UAE Armed Forces has announced. Previously it was mandatory to serve for 12 months. Women of the same age group as well as men aged between 30 and 40 can volunteer irrespective of their educational qualification. Since its implementation in 2014, the national service programme has achieved positive results and reflected positively on the conduct of the recruits. It is considered one of the UAE's most effective and important strategic move, in the light of its anticipated strategic outcomes in political, military, security, national, social and economic terms, reported national news agency WAM.

The mandatory military service for all Emiratis aged between 18 and 30 and setting up a new national defence and reserve force was introduced in June 2014 by virtue of the UAE National Service Law. And employers cannot sack or deny promotions, salary increases or service benefits to Emiratis, who are serving their term in the national service.

Turkey

- **Ankara to have minimum dialogue with new EU president Austria**

As Austria has taken over the rotating six-month presidency of the European Union in July, Ankara does not expect a considerable agenda with the new term president, even at

¹²⁵ <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/7/6/no-decision-on-russian-arms-deal-says-qatars-emir>

¹²⁶ <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/news/government/uae-national-service-term-extended>

refugee issue, given tensions between Ankara and Vienna. Ankara will likely to have “minimum dialogue” with the new term president Austria, a Turkish official told *Hürriyet Daily News*.¹²⁷

- **In the aftermath of arrests, Turkey hints at response to Israel**

Ebru Özkan was the latest victim of the arbitrary detention policy of Israel towards Turkish citizens. The 27-year-old woman, one of many Turks seeking to visit Jerusalem where sacred Muslim sites are located, was detained on June 11 at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport moments before she was to board a flight to Turkey. Since then, she remains in detention with a court extending her detention period for another six days on Tuesday.¹²⁸

- **Pakistan inks naval shipbuilding, technology transfer deal with Turkey**

Pakistan has signed a contract for the construction of four Milgem/Ada-class corvettes with the Turkish state-controlled shipyard M/s ASFAT A.S. The deal, inked July 5, is part of Pakistan's efforts to replace aged warships featuring systems nearing the end of manufacturer support, boost its conventional deterrent vis-a-vis India, and better safeguard its maritime economy and trade links. According to a Navy news release, the contract includes “complete transfer of technology and the transfer of intellectual proprietary rights for the design of these ships to Pakistan.”¹²⁹

- **Turkey plans to restore their World War I base in northwest Aleppo**

Turkey is planning to restore their World War I base that was situated in the Afrin region of northwestern Aleppo, Ankara state-owned Anadolu News Agency reported on Saturday. Known as the “Ataturk Base,” this military installation will be renovated and turned into a museum, the Hatay Province Governorate Erdal Ata stated on 07 July, as quoted by Anadolu.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Ankara to have minimum dialogue with new EU president Austria, *Hurriyat Daily News*, July 3, 2018. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/ankara-to-have-minimum-dialogue-with-new-eu-president-austria-134094>

¹²⁸ In the aftermath of arrests, Turkey hints at response to Israel, *Daily Sabah*, July 6, 2018. <https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2018/07/07/in-the-aftermath-of-arrests-turkey-hints-at-response-to-israel>

¹²⁹ Pakistan inks naval shipbuilding, technology transfer deal with Turkey, *Defence News*, July 6, 2018. <https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2018/07/05/pakistan-inks-naval-shipbuilding-technology-transfer-deal-with-turkey/>

¹³⁰¹³⁰ Turkey plans to restore their World War I base in northwest Aleppo, *Al-Masdar News*, July 7, 2018. <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/turkey-plans-to-restore-their-world-war-i-base-in-northwest-aleppo/>

- **Erdogan set to be sworn in as Turkey's first executive president**

Recep Tayyip Erdogan is set to be sworn in as president of Turkey after his election victory in June which allowed him to keep his post with increased powers. The inauguration ceremony on 09 July 2018 will be attended by dozens of foreign leaders and dignitaries, including Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.¹³¹

Saudi Arabia

- **Saudi Arabia Announced to Dig Salwa Canal**

On Sunday 8 July 2018, Saudi Arabia reiterated its commitment to dig Salwa Water Canal connecting the Kingdom with the waterways of the Arabian Gulf. Once canal is built, Qatar would become an Island and lose much of its direct connectivity and lose much of its strategic significance. The objectives as cited by the Saudi side are to strengthen Kingdom's political and economic interest, especially helpful in promoting sea trade and tourism on the shorelines of the Arabian Gulf. The canal is planned to be of 60 kms long, 200 metres wide and up to 20 metres in depth. The estimated cost is expected to be around SAR 2.8 billion (Dh2.74 billion).¹³² UAE has not announced its participation in the project yet but the project will provide the shortest route to UAE ports, Bahrain and Dammam. A whole lot of tourist places will be built on the shorelines, including villas, fun marts, beaches, etc. It will be brng economic benefits similar to Suez canal is benefitting to Egypt.

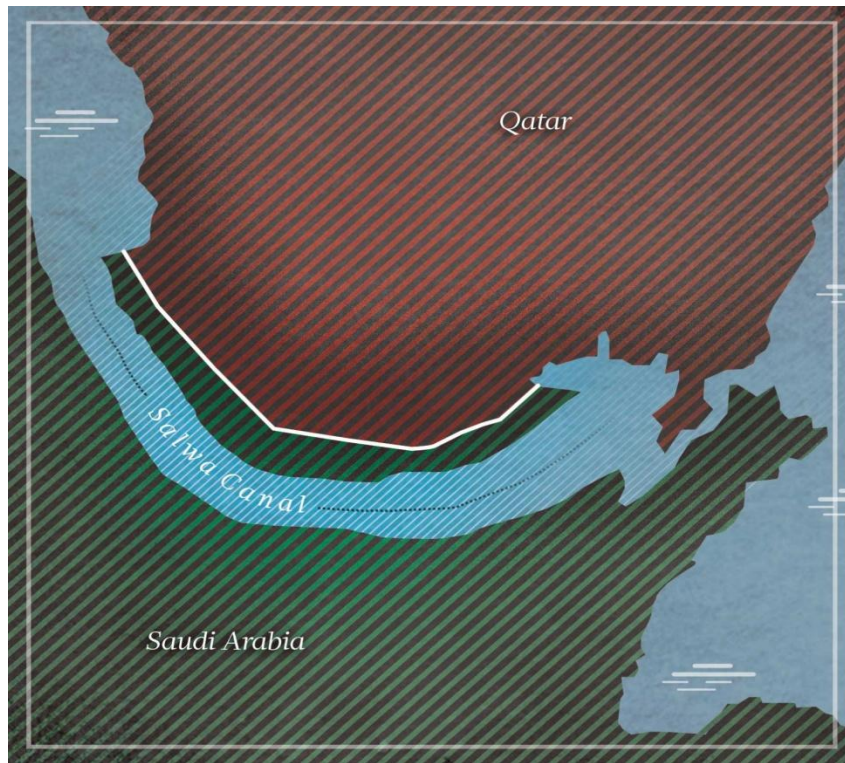
Politically, the Canal will be a setback to Qatar. It will cut off Doha from the mainland of GCC, turning it into an isolated little Island. To add to Qatari woes, Saudi Arabia has planned to establish an active military base in a hazardous nuclear waste dumping site on the Qatari side of the canal — which is still a Saudi territory.¹³³ The canal is also seen as a silent, powerful and strong message of the Anti-Terror Quartet to Qatar and its policies that do not suit to the national interests of these countries, which have cut off diplomatic their relations with Doha in June last year. Dr Anwar Gargash, the UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, said in a Tweet that Salwa Water Canal is an open proof of Qatar's failure in managing and resolving diplomatic crisis. It is fair to say Qatar has lost its Salwa border-crossing. Hence, Salwa "Maaku". In other words — Salwa, no more.

Map below shows the route of the Salwa canal, passing from one end to other. The Saudi territory is on both the sides of the Canal.

¹³¹ Erdogan set to be sworn in as Turkey's first executive president, *Aljazeera*, July 9, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/07/erdogan-set-sworn-turkey-executive-president-180708165200590.html>

¹³² <https://gulfnews.com/opinion/thinkers/salwa-canal-arab-quartet-s-silent-message-to-qatar-1.2248253>

¹³³ Ibid.



Source: Gulf News.

- **Saudi Arabia Tops the Donor Countries' List in Yemen**

Saudi Arabia tops the list of donor country in Yemen, both in the 2018 UN Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (UNYHRP) and outside of it. Riyadh has donated approximately US\$ 2 billion to Yemeni bank to stabilise the economy and currency of Yemen, while with the UAE that total amount of donation to UNYHRP stands around US\$ 930 million.¹³⁴ The strategic objectives of the YHRP are: Saving lives, protecting civilians, enhancing equitable aid distribution, guaranteeing the flexibility and durability of humanitarian work and its support to the sustainable recovery. Its direct impact of the donation is to alleviate the human sufferings in Yemen. It is estimated that approximately 10,000 people have been killed, including half of them are children since the coalition forces launched military operation in Yemen to restore the legitimate government in Sana'a overthrown by the rebel Houthis in 2015. Saudi Arabia under a royal decree also established Yemen Comprehensive Humanitarian Operations (YCHO) Support Center. The immediate objectives of YCHO are to 'improve the Yemeni humanitarian situation by addressing immediate aid shortfalls while simultaneously building capacity for long-term improvement of humanitarian aid and commercial goods imports to Yemen'.¹³⁵ According to UN, Yemen is passing through the worst humanitarian crisis; its 22 million people need immediate assistance. Approximately 2

¹³⁴ <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1335061/saudi-arabia>

¹³⁵ Ibid.

million Yemenis work in Saudi Arabia and remit around US\$ 10 million annually to their respective families.

- **Saudi Arabia opposes Qatar's Russian missile purchase**

Qatar is going ahead with its plans to buy S-400s over Saudi Arabia's objection. Riyadh, which has levelled an air, ground and sea blockade against Qatar for more than a year now, has even suggested it is ready to take military action against Doha to destroy the missiles if they are delivered. In spite of this threat Moscow has affirmed it will still supply the missiles.¹³⁶

- **Saudi Arabia: 234,000 foreigners lose jobs during the first quarter of 2018**

Official data from Saudi Arabia, released on 05 July, showed that 234,000 foreigners lost their jobs in the private and public sectors during the first quarter of 2018. The facts were reported by *Anadolu Agency's* survey based on the data of the Saudi General Authority for Statistics. The number of non-Saudi employees fell from 10.42 million at the end of the fourth quarter of 2017 to 10.18 million at the end of the first quarter of 2018. Similarly, the rates of Saudi employees decreased to 3.15 million by the end of the first quarter of this year, compared to 3.16 million in the fourth quarter of 2017.¹³⁷

- **Yemeni forces launch ballistic missile at industrial target in Saudi Arabia**

Yemeni army forces, supported by allied fighters from the Houthi Ansarullah movement and those from Popular Committees, have fired a domestically-designed and -developed ballistic missile at a strategic economic target in Saudi Arabia's southwestern border region of Jizan in retaliation for the Riyadh regime's brutal military aggression against the impoverished country.¹³⁸

- **Saudi Arabia Largest Arms Buyer from Western Balkans in 2016: UN Report**

Saudi Arabia topped the list of countries importing arms, ammunition and equipment from the Western Balkans in 2016, according to a report prepared at the request of the United Nations. Weapons producers and governments in the region, which comprises Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania, are boosting arms

¹³⁶ Hypocritical Saudi Arabia opposes Qatar's Russian missile purchase, *The New Arab*, July 3, 2018 <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2018/7/3/hypocritical-saudi-arabia-opposes-qatars-russian-missile-purchase>

¹³⁷ Saudi Arabia: 234,000 foreigners lose jobs during the first quarter of 2018, *Middle East Monitor*, July 6, 2018. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180706-saudi-arabia-234-thousand-foreigners-unemployed-during-the-first-quarter-of-2018/>

¹³⁸ Yemeni forces launch ballistic missile at industrial target in Saudi Arabia, *Press TV*, July 6, 2018. <https://www.presstv.com/Detail/2018/07/06/567282/Yemen-ballistic-missile-Saudi-Arabia-Jizan-Houthis-Hudaydah>

production and exports of surplus stocks to improve their struggling economies, Reuters News Agency cited the report.¹³⁹

- **Gunmen kill Saudi security officer and foreign national in Buraidah attack**

A member of Saudi Arabia's security forces and a foreign citizen were killed in an attack at a checkpoint in Buraidah, Qassim Province, on 08 July. Two of the attackers were also killed and another injured in the ensuing gunfight, the Saudi Press Agency reported. The three men opened fire at 3:45 p.m. local time from a Hyundai Elantra, an Interior Ministry spokesman said.¹⁴⁰

Israel

- **Israel, Hamas and Turkey**

The IDF Prosecution filed an indictment in the Samaria Military Court on July 8th against a Turkish woman for smuggling funds to Hamas during trips to Israel and the West Bank. She was arrested on June 11th. On July 6th, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told Turkey's Anadolu Agency that Ankara would "respond" to her arrest and that normalization between the two countries would only occur once Israel stops its "inhumane, wrong policies."¹⁴¹

- **Israel and Palestine**

Knesset passed a legislation on 2nd July that the value of welfare payments paid out by the PA to Palestinian prisoners and their relatives will be deducted from tax revenues Israel transfers annually to the administrative body. PA spokesperson Nabil Abu Rudeineh stated that the measure amounted to a "declaration of war on the Palestinian people."¹⁴² Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said July 8th that he will continue paying stipends to Palestinian attackers and their families despite the Israeli parliament's decision last week to withhold hundreds of millions in funds from taxes collected on the Palestinian Authority's behalf. Israel has called on Palestinians for years to halt the stipends, which benefit roughly 35,000 families of Palestinians killed,

¹³⁹ Saudi Arabia Largest Arms Buyer from Western Balkans in 2016: UN Report, *Al Manar*, July 7, 2018. <https://english.almanar.com.lb/535273>

¹⁴⁰ Gunmen kill Saudi security officer and foreign national in Buraidah attack, *Arab News*, July 8, 2018. <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1335436/saudi-arabia>

¹⁴¹ Anna Ahronheim and Yonah Jeremy Bob, "IDF indicts Turkish woman on smuggling funds for Hamas", *The Jerusalem Post*, July 8, 2018, <https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/IDF-indicts-Turkish-woman-on-smuggling-funds-for-Hamas-561965> accessed on July 9, 2018

¹⁴² "PA: Israeli law withholding funds over terrorist stipends 'a declaration of war'", *The Times of Israel*, July 3, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/pa-israeli-law-withholding-funds-over-terrorist-stipends-a-declaration-of-war/> accessed on July 9, 2018

wounded or jailed in the conflict with Israel, many of them accused of involvement in terror.¹⁴³

- **Israel and Syria**

Syrian air defenses were activated near the T-4 air base in central Syria on July 8th night, in response to an airstrike on the facility, which Syrian state media attributed to the Israeli military. Syria’s SANA news outlet claimed that the country’s air defenses “damaged one of the attacking aircraft and forced the rest to leave the airspace.” The state mouthpiece also said that the air defenses intercepted a number of incoming missiles aimed at the base. Syrian state news outlet acknowledged that the airstrike caused damage to the T-4 air base, located between the cities of Homs and Palmyra. There was no comment from the IDF.¹⁴⁴ The T4 airbase has been reported to have been used by Iranian forces.¹⁴⁵

Terrorism and Counter Terrorism

Pakistan

S.No.	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	July 2	Balochistan	At least six security personnel were killed and two others were injured in a rocket attack on a bomb disposal team in the Mashkay area of Awaran district. Following this incident, security forces launched a search operation in the area. ¹⁴⁶	6	2
2	July 3	Balochistan	Three employees of an oil and gas company were killed and five others were injured in a landmine blast in the Toba Nokhani area of Dera Bugti district. ¹⁴⁷	3	5
3	July 7	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	At least seven people, including Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) candidate Sherin Malik, were injured when his convoy was attacked in a bomb blast in Takhti Kheil area of Bannu district. No outfit claimed responsibility for the attack. ¹⁴⁸	0	7

¹⁴³ “Defiant Abbas says he won’t halt stipends to terrorists”, *The Times of Israel*, July 9, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/defiant-abbas-says-he-wont-halt-stipends-to-terrorists/> accessed on July 9, 2018

¹⁴⁴ Judah Ari Gross, “Syria accuses Israel of striking Iran-linked base, says air defenses deployed”, *The Times of Israel*, July 8, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-allegedly-strikes-t-4-base-triggering-syrian-air-defenses/> , accessed on July 9, 2018

¹⁴⁵ Jack Khoury, “Syria: Israel Behind Attack on Iranian Air Force Base Near Homs”, *Haaretz*, July 9, 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/syria-airstrike-hits-t4-airbase-near-homs-1.6248915> , accessed on July 9, 2018

¹⁴⁶ Saleem Shahid, Six security men martyred in Awaran attack, *Dawn*, July 3, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1417547/six-security-men-martyred-in-awaran-attack>, accessed on July 9, 2018

¹⁴⁷ Ali Jan Mangi, Three surveyors killed in Dera Bugti landmine blast, *Dawn*, July 4, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1417805/three-surveyors-killed-in-dera-bugti-landmine-blast>, accessed on July 9, 2018

¹⁴⁸ 7 including MMA candidate injured in Bannu blast, *Dawn*, July 7, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1418562/7-including-mma-candidate-injured-in-bannu-blast>, accessed on July 9, 2018

Afghanistan

S.No.	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	July 3	Ukraine	<p>Ukraine will increase the number of its troops in the NATO-led Operation Resolute Support in Afghanistan from 11 to 29, according to a Ukraine Inform Report.</p> <p>The head of the Directorate for Cooperation with NATO of the Government Office for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Oleksiy Henchev said that the increase in the number of Ukrainian troops in the NATO mission in Afghanistan is “not just a political signal,” but it will also gives Ukrainian soldiers experience and strengthen the operational ability to carry out combat missions in eastern Ukraine.¹⁴⁹</p>	Ukraine to increase troops in Afghanistan	
2	July 5	Nangarhar	A Taliban ‘commander’, identified as Hakimullah, and two of his accomplices were killed while four Taliban militants were injured in an explosion in Khoghyani district. ¹⁵⁰	3	4
3	July 6	Kabul	Taliban rejected government’s claim of Taliban entering into peace talks with the Afghan authorities, calling it a “propaganda” aimed as “deceiving people.” Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said that Kabul administration and some peace and provincial officials had once again started false rumors about peace talks. ¹⁵¹	Taliban rejects Government’s claim of entering peace talks.	
4	July 7	July 7	Taliban militants conducted 12 attacks in some districts and the capital city of Ghazni, killing Police Special Forces commander Mohammad Zarif and three Policemen in	10	7

¹⁴⁹ Ukraine to Increase Number of Troops in Afghanistan, *Tolo News*, July 4, 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/ukraine-increase-number-troops-afghanistan>, accessed on July 9, 2018

¹⁵⁰ Taliban Commander Killed in Nangarhar’s Khoghyani District, *Tolo News*, July 5, 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/taliban%20A0commander%20A0killed-nangarhar%E2%80%99s-khoghyani-district>, accessed on July 9, 2018

¹⁵¹ Foreign Troops on Afghan Soil ‘Main Issue’: Taliban, *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, July 7, 2018, http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21287, accessed on July 9, 2018

			Zan Khan district. The SFs retaliated after the attack, killing six militants and injuring seven others. ¹⁵²		
5	July 7-8	Balkh, Faryab & Baghlan	At least 38 militants were killed while 26 others were injured in during the ongoing military operations, Walid-9 operations, in three different provinces (Balkh, Faryab, and Baghlan provinces). According to the breakup of casualties, 22 militants were killed and 16 were injured in Chamtal district of Balkh. Separately, 10 militants were killed and seven others were injured in Almar district of Faryab. In addition, six militants were killed and two others were injured in Dahan-e-Ghori area of Baghlan. ¹⁵³	38	26

Iraq

S.No.	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	July 7	Diyala	A security man guarding an oil pipeline in Soussa, 50 kilometres west of Baqubah, was killed and three others were wounded in an attack by a group of IS militants in Diyala. There was no further detail about the attack. ¹⁵⁴	1	3
2	July 8	Mosul	At least 27 Islamic State (IS) terrorists were killed and five of their hotbeds were destroyed during a military operation backed by Iraqi Air Force in Mosul city. While confirming the incident, Major Hammam Salem al-Obeidi said that the military	27	5

¹⁵² 10 Including 4 Security Personnel Killed in Ghazni Attacks, *Tolo News*, July 8, 2018, http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21298, accessed on July 9, 2018

¹⁵³ 64 militants killed, wounded in during Walid-9 operations: Shaheen Corps, *Khaama Press*, July 8, 2018, <https://www.khaama.com/64-militants-killed-wounded-in-during-walid-9-operations-shaheen-corps-05535/>, accessed on July 9, 2018

¹⁵⁴ Mohammed Ebraheem, Three guards killed, wounded in IS attack on oil pipeline in Baqubah, *Iraqi News*, July 7, 2018, <https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/three-guards-killed-wounded-in-is-attack-on-oil-pipeline-in-baqubah/>, accessed on July 9, 2018

			operation also destroyed three tunnels and two caves that were used by the militants. ¹⁵⁵		
3	July 8	Diyala	Two Philippine women who were abducted by unidentified armed assailants on July 7, 2018, on a road linking Baghdad to Erbil, the capital of Iraq's Kurdish region, were freed. ¹⁵⁶	Two abducted Philippine women freed	

Syria

S.No.	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	July 5	Aleppo	A civilian was killed and 22 others were injured in a blast that took place in al Hayya town of Manbij as citizens had gathered to protest against Turkish forces. ¹⁵⁷	1	22
2	July 8	Eastern Daraa	Syrian government air raids targeted a group of rebels in Um al-Mayadin village, killing at least four people. This led to the breaching of the ceasefire deal - brokered by Russia - on July 6, 2018. ¹⁵⁸ The United States, Russia and Jordan reached a ceasefire and "de-escalation agreement" for southwestern Syria on July 6, 2018.	4	0
3	July 8	Daraa	The rebel forces in Daraa were encouraged by the Russian military to reconcile with the government because the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) will be deployed to northern Syria next for an offensive in the Idlib Governorate. ¹⁵⁹	Rebel forces in Daraa encouraged to reconcile with government.	

¹⁵⁵ Mohammed Ebraheem, 27 Islamic State militants killed in Mosul military operation, *Iraqi News*, July 8, 2018, <https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/27-islamic-state-militants-killed-in-mosul-military-operation/>, accessed on July 9, 2018

¹⁵⁶ Two Philippine women kidnapped in Iraq freed, *Al Jazeera*, July 8, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/07/philippine-women-kidnapped-iraq-freed-180708155935749.html>, accessed on July 9, 2018

¹⁵⁷ Nehal Mostafa, One killed, 22 others injured in bomb blast among SDF supporters, north of Syria, *Iraqi News*, July 5, 2018, <https://www.iraqinews.com/arab-world-news/one-killed-22-others-injured-in-bomb-blast-among-sdf-supporters-north-of-syria/>, accessed on July 9, 2018

¹⁵⁸ Arwa Ibrahim, Syria truce deal 'breached' as western Deraa clashes intensify, *Al Jazeera*, July 8, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/07/syria-truce-deal-breached-western-deraa-clashes-intensify-180708112158789.html>, accessed on July 9, 2018

¹⁵⁹ Leith Aboufadel, Exclusive: Rebels encouraged to reconcile in Daraa as Idlib is next Syrian Army target, *Al Masdar News*, July 9, 2018, <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/exclusive-rebels-encouraged-to-reconcile-in-daraa-as-idlib-is-next-syrian-army-target/>, accessed on July 9, 2018

International Economic Issues

- **Trade War begins: US and China exchange \$34 billion in tariffs**

On July 6, 2018, US tariffs on \$34 billion worth of Chinese goods kicked in, escalating a war of words between the world's two largest economies into a full-blown trade conflict. Washington's 25 percent duties went into effect at midnight EDT and affected products such as water boilers, X-ray machine components, airplane tires and various other industrial parts. China immediately implemented retaliatory tariffs on its \$34 billion list of goods issued last month, including soybeans, pork and electric vehicles. Beijing called it the "biggest trade war in economic history." Another \$16 billion are expected to go into effect in two weeks.¹⁶⁰

- **Japan becomes second country after Mexico to ratify TPP-11 deal**

On July 6, 2018, Japan became the second country to ratify the revised Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal, the same day the United States imposed the first round of prohibitive tariffs on some Chinese goods in a move many fear will lead to a drawn-out trade war. Japan's economy will likely get an 8 trillion yen (\$72.28 billion) boost from the TPP even as agricultural and sea produce may see an up to 150 billion yen worth of negative impact, according to the government's estimate. The Diet has enacted legislation to provide support for Japanese livestock farmers who will be exposed to foreign competition and to extend intellectual property rights in line with the TPP.¹⁶¹

- **NAFTA deal possible, says Mexico's new economy minister**

Mexico's incoming economy minister, Graciela Márquez, says a NAFTA deal by October is possible and believes a "Nafta-lite" — or, as a last resort, a bilateral trade deal with the US — would be better than no agreement at all. Ms. Márquez thinks US president Donald Trump could sell a deal to his supporters as a sign that Mexico's strong new leader had bent to his will. "I think he's now willing to sign Nafta because he hasn't really had anything completed other than the Korean negotiation." Ms. Márquez was optimistic despite the deadlock on contentious NAFTA issues, such as rules for the key auto sector, dispute resolution and the US desire to put the whole deal up for periodic renegotiation. Mr. Andrés Manuel López Obrador won a landslide election victory on July 2, 2018 and will take office on December 1 as the most powerful Mexican president in a generation, with majorities in both houses of Congress.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Weizhen Tan, "Trade War begins: US and China exchange \$34 billion in tariffs", *Reuters*, July 6, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/07/06/trade-war-worries-us-china-tariffs-to-kick-in-on-friday.html> (accessed on July 6, 2018)

¹⁶¹ "Japan completes domestic procedures to ratify TPP without US", *The Mainichi*, July 6, 2018, <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20180706/p2g/00m/0bu/063000c> accessed on July 6, 2018)

¹⁶² Jude Webber, "Nafta deal possible, says Mexico's new economy minister", *The Financial Times*, July 8, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/e1bc19e2-813b-11e8-bc55-50daf11b720d> (accessed on July 9, 2018)