

## **Weekly Media Updates** **(23 – 29 July, 2018)**

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## Africa

- **PM Modi concluded three-nation Africa tour<sup>1</sup>**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 27 July 2018, Friday, returned back home after concluding his three-nation Africa tour during which he attended the BRICS Summit in South Africa and he held bilateral meetings with several world leaders including presidents of China and Russia.

On the last leg of his trip, Mr. Modi visited South Africa where he attended the BRICS summit and also held bilateral meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, South African President Ramaphosa, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and other leaders.

Earlier, Mr. Modi travelled to Rwanda on a two-day visit, becoming the first Indian premier to visit the East African country.

Modi held wide-ranging talks with Rwanda's President Paul Kagame and the two sides signed a defence cooperation agreement. India also extended a USD 200 million lines of credit to Rwanda for its economic development.

From Rwanda, Mr. Modi travelled to Uganda — the first bilateral tour by an Indian prime minister since 1997 — where he held wide-ranging talks with President Yoweri Museveni and also addressed the country's Parliament. India extended two lines of credit worth nearly \$200 million to Uganda in energy infrastructure, agriculture and dairy sectors.

- **AU Military Chiefs Raise Red Flag on Foreign Military Bases<sup>1</sup>**

African Union (AU) military chiefs have raised concern over the involvement of external forces in regional conflicts, particularly in the Horn of Africa, saying that the increase in foreign military bases of western countries could potentially derail efforts towards achieving peace and stability.

The concern was raised yesterday at the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) Policy Organs meetings in Kigali. For long, countries in the Horn of Africa, including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia have witnessed sustained political and social conflicts. The Horn of Africa is one of the most conflict-ravaged regions on the continent, with constant battles involving armed campaigns against the Al-Shabab terrorist group.

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<sup>1</sup> The Hindu, 20 July 2018, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/modi-to-visit-rwanda-uganda-s-africa-next-week-mea/article24469769.ece>

Although the African Union representative commended efforts to restore peace, they highlighted that the increasing number of foreign military bases on the continent was cause for concern

Currently, America has its permanent military base in Djibouti, Camp Lemonnier, which serves as the refuelling point for all U.S naval ships.

China also set up its naval base in the same country last year. UAE has a base in Somaliland while Russia was in talks with Somalia to open a military base in there

- **The UAE awards Ethiopian and Eritrean leaders with highest civil honour<sup>2</sup>**

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki were conferred with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Order of Zayed, the highest civil honour. The award was conferred by Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, Crown prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces in recognition of their work for peace between the two nations. The recognition came during a tripartite summit comprising Eritrea, Ethiopia and the UAE.

The two African leaders aren't the first that the UAE has given an award to before. The UAE conferred on Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir the Zayed Medal of First Class for his stance towards Arab issues early last year.

With both countries having come to an agreement about using Eritrea's port, economic ties between the two countries could resume. Ethiopia's Prime Minister Ahmed has been hailed for his sweeping reformation. PM Ahmed, the youngest leader in Africa is also leading Ethiopia out of a one party system into a multiparty system.

- **Ethiopia and Eritrea appoint ambassadors in more than two decades<sup>3</sup>**

Peace has brought new relationships, possibilities and opportunities between Ethiopia and Eritrea. After 22 years, Ethiopia and Eritrea appointed new ambassadors, and reopened embassies in each other's country.

Redwan Hussein was appointed as Ethiopia's first ambassador to Eritrea in more than 20 years. Semere Russom was appointed as Eritrea's ambassador to Ethiopia.

The Spokesperson Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia in a statement said, "His Excellency Ambassador Hussien has been elected as the minister of Ethiopia in 20 years after 20 years of the Ethiopian government." Eritrea's President Isaias Afwerki also appointed Semere Russom as Eritrea's ambassador to Ethiopia. Semere is currently Eritrea's Minister of Education. He will however retain his ministerial appointment. In previous times, he served as Eritrea's Ambassador to the U.S. The two countries have taken various steps to cement the existing peace and give hope that deeply divided regions across the continent will find lasting peace.

- **America's Insistence that Africans Must Wear Used Clothes<sup>4</sup>**

Rwanda is a small landlocked African country with a 24,670 square kilometer, a population of 11.9 million and a GDP of \$8.9 Billion. It is with this country, the United States, US, the world's largest economy with a \$20.412 Trillion GDP, a 9,147,420 square kilometre and a population of 326,920,253, has picked a trade war.

Yet, this trade war tiny Rwanda is fighting, is on behalf of Africa following US' insistence that Africans must wear clothes already used by Americans .

The steps that led to the war began in March 2016 when the Heads of State of Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan who constitute the East African Community, EAC, decided to ban the importation of used clothes by 2019 as part of the EAC Vision 2050. They sought to grow the manufacturing sector from 8.7 percent to 25 percent by 2032.

They also agreed to increase import duties on used clothing to discourage its use and promote local production. As part of this decision, Uganda for example increased the environmental levy on used clothes from 15 percent to 20 percent while Rwanda increased the import duty on used American clothes from \$0.25 to \$2.50 per kilogramme. Tanzania increased its own tariffs from 0.2 to 0.4 US dollars per kilogramme.

The US was livid; how can Africans decide to shun clothes discarded by Americans? How will American second hand clothe traders unionised under the Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles Association, SMART, continue in business? In 2017, it sent a warning to the African countries to either accept the used American clothes, or be punished. But the African countries refused to be intimidated.

- **South African Officials Praise BRICS Summit Outcomes<sup>2</sup>**

New measures to strengthen cooperation on innovation and industrialization were taken at the end of the BRICS Summit in South Africa. This has sent a clear signal of continued multilateralism and opposition to protectionism. Leonid Slutsky, chairman of the foreign affairs committee for the lower house of parliament, made the remarks in response to Xi's speech which was titled "Keeping Abreast of the Trend of the Times to Achieve Common Development" at the BRICS Business Forum in Johannesburg, South Africa, on July 25, 2018. For Anil Sooklal, Deputy Director General at the Department of International Relations and Cooperation in South Africa, "we must continue to broaden and deepen cooperation for the BRICS countries, because BRICS is not just about the five countries, it is about creating a partnership with the rest of the world, especially developing countries". The

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<sup>2</sup> Africa News, July 29, 2018, <http://www.africanews.com/2018/07/29/south-african-officials-praise-brics-summit-outcomes/>

outcome of the summit should promote further development of BRICS cooperation during the second “Golden Decade”. Officials say it should also play a significant role in stimulating global economic growth and improving global governance.

- **South Africa's Ramaphosa Says to Discuss Nuclear with Putin in Future<sup>3</sup>**

South Africa’s President Cyril Ramaphosa said on July 27, 2018 that a private meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin this week ended with an agreement that the two countries would discuss a nuclear power deal in the future. Ramaphosa has put nuclear expansion on the back burner since taking office in February 2018, saying it is too expensive, and has focused instead on pledges to revive the economy and crack down on corruption. His scandal-plagued predecessor, Jacob Zuma, had championed a deal to dramatically increase South Africa’s nuclear capacity despite concern from ratings agencies that it would deal a further blow to the country’s already strained public finances. A Rosatom executive told Reuters on July 26, 2018 that the company was “still interested” in helping South Africa expand its nuclear capacity.

- **Government has Trumpeted China's Pledge of R193 Billion – But South Africa has Invested Much More Than That in China<sup>4</sup>**

South Africa invests eight times more in China than the other way around. The US\$14.7 billion (R193 billion) in Chinese investments – which include loans to Transnet and Eskom – announced during Chinese President Xi Jinping’s state visit to South Africa, are dwarfed by South Africa’s investment in that country, which stood at just over US\$80 billion in 2016, according to a recent report compiled by Deloitte for the Department of Trade and Industry. At that same time, China’s investment in South Africa was US\$10 billion. Trade and industry minister Rob Davies pointed out this discrepancy this week during this Brics summit in Johannesburg, when he was asked whether the new Chinese investments would not “overcrowd” the South African market. “We are in the situation where we welcome more,” Davies said.

- **Erdogan Warns South Africa of FETÖ, Says All Terror Groups Have Same Goal<sup>5</sup>**

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey denounced all terrorist groups on in a speech on July 26, 2018 given during his visit to South Africa. Along with slamming the al-Qaida terrorist group, Daesh and the PKK, he also warned South Africa against the threat posed by the Gülenist Terror Group (FETÖ). Erdoğan addressed a gathering of Muslim community leaders during a visit to Johannesburg where he

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<sup>3</sup> Reuters, July 27, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-safrica-brics-nuclear/south-africas-ramaphosa-says-to-discuss-nuclear-with-putin-in-future-idUSKBN1KH1ZG>

<sup>4</sup> Business Insider, July 26, 2018, <https://www.businessinsider.co.za/south-africa-invests-much-more-in-china-2018-7>

<sup>5</sup> Daily Sabah, July 27, 2018, <https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2018/07/27/erdogan-warns-south-africa-of-feto-says-all-terror-groups-have-same-goal>

was attending the BRICS Summit. Speaking about FETÖ, he warned, "We must be vigilant against this organization whose main goal is to pit a brother against brother." Erdoğan called terrorist organizations targeting Turkey such as Daesh, FETÖ and the PKK "nests of evil" that slaughter their brothers.

- **PM Narendra Modi Meets Leaders of Argentina, Angola<sup>6</sup>**

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held bilateral meetings with the Presidents of Argentina and Angola on the sidelines of the 2018 BRICS Summit here, the External Affairs Ministry said on July 27, 2018. "Discussed enhancing cooperation in trade and investment, agriculture and food processing and pharma," MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted following the meeting that ended late on July 26, 2018 night. In the meeting with Angolan President Joao Lourenco, the two sides discussed intensifying relations in trade and investment, agriculture and food processing, pharmaceuticals, oil and natural gas, Kumar said in a separate tweet.

- **WDC Marks First Official Mission to Angola<sup>7</sup>**

Marking the first World Diamond Council (WDC) mission to Angola outside of a formal Kimberley Process (KP) meeting, acting president Stephane Fischler and executive director Marie-Chantal Kaninda travelled to Angola for a series of meetings with stakeholders involved in the KP. The WDC on July 24, 2018 noted that Angola's second-largest export is diamonds, amounting to gross revenues to Angola of about US\$1.1billion. The WDC and Angolan stakeholders discussed the important efforts under way in Angola to formalise the artisanal mining sector. This effort is part of the country's strategy to improve its position globally in the production and commercialisation of diamonds.

- **Turkish President Meets Zambian Counterpart in Lusaka, Announces Deals on 12 Areas<sup>8</sup>**

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met his Zambian counterpart Edgar Lungu in the capital Lusaka on July 28, 2018 before announcing that the two countries have agreed to sign deals on 12 areas. Erdoğan and first lady Emine Erdoğan were accompanied by Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Finance and Treasury Minister Berat Albayrak, National Defense Minister Hulusi Akar, Trade Minister Ruhsar Pekcan and other two lawmakers. He was welcomed by President Lungu and his wife, the Zambian foreign minister, the Zambian ambassador in Ankara and Turkey's ambassador in Lusaka including other ministers and diplomats upon their arrival at the Kenneth Kaunde International Airport.

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<sup>6</sup> The Economic Times, July 27, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/pm-narendra-modi-meets-leaders-of-argentina-angola/articleshow/65160885.cms>

<sup>7</sup> Mining Weekly, July 24, 2018, [http://www.miningweekly.com/article/wdc-marks-first-official-mission-to-angola-2018-07-24/rep\\_id:3650](http://www.miningweekly.com/article/wdc-marks-first-official-mission-to-angola-2018-07-24/rep_id:3650)

<sup>8</sup> Hurriyet Daily News, July 28, 2018, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-president-meets-zambian-counterpart-in-lusaka-135142>

- **Botswana, China Sign MoUs to Improve Trade Relations<sup>9</sup>**

Botswana and China on July 23, 2018 signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to strengthen trade and investment ties. The MoUs were signed in Gaborone, capital of Botswana, during the Botswana-China Business Forum, which was attended by a business delegation from China led by Jiang Zengwei, chairperson of the China Council for Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT). The signing was facilitated by the host Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC), Business Botswana and the CCPIT. Unity Dow, Botswana's Minister of International Affairs and Cooperation, said she expected the engagement to boost trade and investment linkage between Botswana and China. She said Botswana was committed to attracting foreign direct investment with the aim of diversifying the economy and creating job opportunities.

- **SADC Observers will Not Endorse a Sham Election in Zimbabwe<sup>10</sup>**

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) observer mission says it will not endorse a bogus election in Zimbabwe. The 63-member SADC team, led by Angola's secretary of state in the External Relations ministry, Tete Antonio, said after meeting political parties in Harare at the weekend that they would not endorse a sham election as their mandate was to witness a fully democratic process. Political instability in Lesotho, skirmishes in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Madagascar - where elections are due in November 2018 - and Zimbabwe's military-engineered removal of Robert Mugabe have cast a bad light on the region in recent years.

- **Mugabe's Gone, but Zimbabwe Still has a Serious Cash Shortage<sup>11</sup>**

Zimbabwe has been facing a major cash shortage for the past two years, a symptom of the country's larger and longer economic crisis. After Robert Mugabe was ousted from power by the military last November (2017), his replacement, Emmerson Mnangagwa, has claimed that Zimbabwe is now "open for business." But getting cash into the country is complicated, and access to physical currency hasn't improved with the leadership change. The cash problem stems from massive hyperinflation Zimbabwe experienced in the years leading up to 2009. By then, inflation was so bad that the Reserve Bank was printing notes with a valuation of 100 trillion Zimbabwean dollars — reported to be worth about US\$300 at the time. Zimbabwe eventually abandoned its currency in favor of the U.S. dollar and several other currencies. But as the country slipped into a widening trade deficit and a lack of foreign investment, US dollars became harder and harder to find in the country. So the central bank introduced bills called "bond notes" in 2016, worth US\$1 each in the country, but worthless outside of Zimbabwe.

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<sup>9</sup> Infosurhoy, July 25, 2018, [http://infosurhoy.com/cocoon/saii/xhtml/en\\_GB/news-summary/botswana-china-sign-mous-to-improve-trade-relations/](http://infosurhoy.com/cocoon/saii/xhtml/en_GB/news-summary/botswana-china-sign-mous-to-improve-trade-relations/)

<sup>10</sup> Times Live, July 23, 2018, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/africa/2018-07-23-sadc-observers-will-not-endorse-a-sham-election-in-zimbabwe/>

<sup>11</sup> NPR, July 28, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/2018/07/28/632986144/mugabes-gone-but-zimbabwe-still-has-a-serious-cash-shortage>

- **Tanzania to Benefit from US\$175bn US Gas Project<sup>12</sup>**

Tanzania is set to benefit from an ambitious US-led initiative to invest in gas-powered power plants in Africa. Through the initiative, US companies will invest US\$175 billion in gas power projects in Tanzania and eight other African countries, namely Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Angola, Mozambique and South Africa. The countries were selected because of their relatively large populations, high gross domestic product and either because they have local gas resources (in operation or under development) or are planning liquefied natural gas (LNG) import projects. The initiative, known as the Gas Roadmap for sub-Saharan Africa, seeks to add some 16,000MW of gas-fired power in nine countries by 2030. The initiative is in its preliminary stages and it is not yet known which country would get how much of the planned investment. The gas roadmap is part of the Power Africa Initiative with gas resources existing in 14 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Tanzania will benefit more because, according to reports, its gas fields together with those of Mozambique account for 62 per cent of total contingent resources in Africa.

- **AfDB Approves US\$123.39 Million Loan for Tanzania's Power Transmission Line Project<sup>13</sup>**

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has approved a US\$123.39m loan that will partially finance the North-West Grid 400kV Nyakanaz-Kigoma power transmission line project in Tanzania. Slated for completion in 2024, the project will see the construction of a 280km transmission line from Nyakanazi to Kigoma, as well as an extension of Nyakanazi substation and construction of a new substation at Kigoma. Additionally, the project scope includes integration of Kigoma and Kasulu 33kV distribution networks with the main grid including the supply of last-mile connection materials to serve at least 10,000 new consumers in Kigoma Region. In addition to AfDB loan, the project is being financed by two other sources including the South Korea Economic Development Co-operation Fund (EDCF) and the Government of Tanzania. By providing 66 per cent of funding to the project, AfDB is the major contributor, followed by South Korea's EDCF with 24 per cent and the Tanzanian Government. The latter has agreed to provide 10 per cent of the overall cost of the project, estimated at US\$186.12 million.

- **New "Smart City" Offers Glimpse into Booming Mauritius-China Cooperation<sup>14</sup>**

The Eden Garden Culture & Entertainment Square that will be unveiled in October 2018 straddles a huge swathe of Jinfei Zone that happens to be the first smart city

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<sup>12</sup> The Citizen, July 26, 2018, <http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/News/Tanzania-to-benefit-from--175bn-project/1840340-4681886-hvvi0yz/index.html>

<sup>13</sup> Power Technology, July 24, 2018, <https://www.power-technology.com/news/afdb-approves-123-39m-loan-tanzanias-power-transmission-line-project/>

<sup>14</sup> Xinhua Net, July 29, 2018, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/29/c\\_137355833.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/29/c_137355833.htm)



to be developed in Mauritius through a partnership with China. This world-class economic and trade zone that occupies 211 hectares of land is located 3.5 kilometers west of the Mauritian capital of Port Louis near some of the country's most iconic landscapes. Mauritius' dream of having an outstanding smart city overlooking a serene beachfront will be realized in 2025 thanks to strategic harnessing of capital, technology and skills from China. It was in 2014 that the Mauritian government unveiled the Smart City Program in a bid to attract investments in high-tech industries, financial services, tourism and the blue economy. China's Shanxi Investments Group was invited to undertake the development of Jinfei Zone, or Jinfei Smart City, in a region that was once a marshland. A new master-plan for Jinfei Zone, that was updated in 2016 and was endorsed by both Mauritian and Chinese governments, seeks to promote tourism, education, healthcare, tourism and finance sectors by harnessing smart technologies. Mauritian Prime Minister Anerood Jugnauth said during a tour of Jinfei Zone early this year that it would herald a new era of economic revival in the country.

- **President Xi in Mauritius for Friendly Visit<sup>15</sup>**

Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived in Mauritius on July 27, 2018 for a friendly visit to the country. Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, were received by Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth and his wife, Kobita Ramdane, at the airport in the capital Port Louis where Jugnauth held a grand ceremony in Xi's honour. Xi said he felt the profound friendship the people and the government of Mauritius have towards the Chinese people upon arrival. China and Mauritius have enjoyed friendly bilateral relations, Xi said, adding that he looks forward to exchanging views with Jugnauth on bilateral relations and on international and regional issues of mutual concern. Mauritius is the last stop in Xi's first overseas trip after he was re-elected Chinese president in March. He visited the United Arab Emirates, Senegal, Rwanda and South Africa. He also attended the 10th BRICS summit in Johannesburg.

- **Vanilla Villainy Eats Away at Madagascar's Sweet Reputation<sup>16</sup>**

Soaring global prices of vanilla should have been good news for Jao Nasaina, a 58-year-old farmer of the luxury spice on the northeast tip of Madagascar. Instead, it has brought poverty, stress and sleepless nights patrolling his little patch of jungle with a spear and home-made pistol to ward off the thieves who sneak in to hack off the prized pods under cover of darkness. Over the last year, police and vigilante groups guarding the northern Malagasy forests of Sava - the world's vanilla capital due to its perfect climate - have caught more than a thousand vanilla rustlers, most of whom are now behind bars, according to local police chief Sirnot Besoa. Sometimes, however, villagers whose livelihoods depend almost exclusively on the

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<sup>15</sup> CGTN, July 28, 2018, <https://africa.cgtn.com/2018/07/28/president-xi-in-mauritius-for-friendly-visit/>

<sup>16</sup> Reuters, July 25, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-madagascar-vanilla/vanilla-villainy-eats-away-at-madagascars-sweet-reputation-idUSKBN1KF20P>

spice used to flavor everything from ice cream to coffee have taken matters into their own hands, beating apprehended suspects to death. The crime wave started last year when the price of black non-split Madagascar vanilla [VAN-MG-BNS], the benchmark for the giant Indian Ocean island's leading export, shot up to a record US\$635 per kilo from just US\$100 two years earlier. The surge in prices, sparked by growing luxury market demand for natural - as opposed to synthetic - vanilla, has since eased slightly to US\$530 but remains high enough for illicit vanilla hunters to take the risk.

- **China Take-Over Worries Kenyans<sup>17</sup>**

China has overtaken the World Bank to become Kenya's single largest creditor, accounting for 72 per cent of the total debt owed to foreign lenders. In just over ten years since Kenya turned from West to East, the government has borrowed Sh534 billion from China, slightly more than Sh508 billion owed to the World Bank, hitherto the leading lender. Kenya owes a whopping Sh5.011 trillion to local and international creditors, banks and countries and will spend 54 per cent of revenue collected in the current financial year to pay debts. The most controversial of Kenya's dizzying borrowing spree in the last ten years remains the Sh332 billion from China's Ex-Im Bank for the SGR in 2014. Of the amount, Sh164 billion is a concessional loan, which is more flexible, having a seven-year grace period. It will be repaid over 20 years. The government has been spending Sh1.6 billion every six months since 2014 to pay the interest. Repayment of the principal starts in 2021. Kenya will part with Sh14 billion annually for 13 years. The remaining Sh167.9 billion borrowed from China is a commercial loan repayable in five years starting 2019. Experts estimate that Kenya will spend over Sh20 billion annually to honour payments for this section of SGR borrowings.

- **Ebola Outbreak Declared Over in Democratic Republic of Congo<sup>18</sup>**

The outbreak of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been declared over with authorities praising the swift and effective response. It is now 42 days since the last case of the haemorrhagic fever was notified, meaning that the incubation period for any new cases of the disease to emerge has passed. The outbreak - which affected 53 people, killing 29 - was first declared on 8 May 2018 in Bikoro, a rural area in Equateur province. However, a fast response by the World Health Organization (WHO), the DRC ministry of health and many other partners meant the outbreak was quickly contained. DRC is the country with the greatest experience at combating Ebola outbreaks - this was its ninth outbreak of the disease first discovered in the country, then known as Zaire, in 1976.

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<sup>17</sup> The Star, July 28, 2018, [https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/07/28/china-take-over-worries-kenyans\\_c1793960](https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/07/28/china-take-over-worries-kenyans_c1793960)

<sup>18</sup> The Telegraph, July 24, 2018, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/0/ebola-outbreak-declared-democratic-republic-congo/>

- **South Sudan Government, Main Opposition Group Sign Peace Deal<sup>19</sup>**

South Sudan's government and the main rebel group inked a power-sharing deal in the Sudanese capital on July 25, 2018 which they hope will end years of conflict, a Reuters witness said, but smaller opposition groups have refrained from signing. Riek Machar, a former vice president who will be reinstated into his old post under the deal, was in the room when the agreement was signed by representatives of the government and his group at a security compound in Khartoum. The agreement, which was reached earlier this month in talks in Uganda, provides for creating a new 35-member government comprising 20 ministers from the current government of President Salva Kiir. Machar's SPLM-IO rebel group will have nine portfolios and the rest will go to other opposition groups. Apart from Machar, Kiir will have four more deputies during an interim period under the agreement that was guided by Sudan and other east African nations. But another opposition group, the SPLM, said in a statement the latest version of the proposed agreement contained several shortfalls, including a "serious lack of consistency in allocating power-sharing ratios at all levels of governance". It also cited "lack of clarity" on whether to dissolve a transitional legislature or to expand it to make it more inclusive.

- **Somalia President Visits Eritrea: Peace, Development on the Agenda<sup>20</sup>**

Somalia's president, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed was received at the Asmara International Airport in Eritrea on July 28, 2018 by president Isaias Afwerki in yet another diplomatic milestone in the Horn of Africa region. Eritrean Information Minister Yemane Gebremeskel, who tweeted images of the Somali president, known as "Farmajo", exchanging a warm handshake with Afwerki, said the two leaders have already held a summit. Gebremeskel added that Farmajo was in Eritrea for a three day state visit. The two nations have not had diplomatic ties for nearly 15 years, in particular because of Asmara's alleged support for the Shebab Islamists, affiliated with al-Qaeda and who are fighting to topple the Somali government. The development in Eritrea-Somali relations follows the historic normalisation of relations between Asmara and Addis Ababa.

- **China Could Place Thousands of Marines in Djibouti as Start of Shifting Focus from Land to Water<sup>21</sup>**

China is expanding their marine forces from 20,000 up to 100,000. The US has 186,000 marines and about 40,000 reserves. A few other Asian countries are in the range of 20,000 to 30,000 marines. China is mainly transferring army units to the marines. China will likely need all of these marines for the South China Sea, Belt and Road protection, protection of oil and commercial shipping, Indian Ocean

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<sup>19</sup> Eyewitness News, July 25, 2018, <http://ewn.co.za/2018/07/26/south-sudan-government-main-opposition-group-sign-peace-deal>

<sup>20</sup> Africa News, July 28, 2018, <http://www.africanews.com/2018/07/28/somalia-president-visits-eritrea-peace-and-development-on-the-agenda/>

<sup>21</sup> Next Big Future, July 27, 2018, <https://www.nextbigfuture.com/2018/07/china-could-place-thousands-of-marines-in-djibouti-as-start-of-shifting-focus-from-land-to-water.html>

activity and possibly if they need something related to Taiwan. China is constructing a naval base in Djibouti to provide what it calls logistical support in one of the world's busiest waterways. The defense ministry said in a statement last year (2017) that the facility was mostly for resupply purposes for anti-piracy, humanitarian and peacekeeping operations. China has not said how many people its base can accommodate, although some media reports have put the figure as high as 10,000.

- **Nigerian Senators Dump Buhari for Main Opposition<sup>22</sup>**

More than a dozen senators left Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari's ruling party for the main opposition on July 24, 2018, in a move seen as a challenge to his bid for re-election. "Over 15 people have decamped, have defected," Senate President Bukola Saraki said in the National Assembly. The senators left former military ruler Buhari's ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on the last day before parliament adjourns for recess. The list of senators includes Rabi'u Kwankwaso, a former governor of the key northern state of Kano, who lost to Buhari in the APC presidential primaries before the 2015 election. He has been seen as a potential presidential candidate for the upcoming election in February next year (2019) but has not yet declared.

- **Nigeria's Pastoral Conflict 'Six Times Deadlier' Than Boko Haram in 2018, ICG Says<sup>23</sup>**

Escalating conflict between herdsman and farmers in Nigeria is "six times deadlier" than Boko Haram-related attacks in 2018, posing a great threat to the country's stability, the International Crisis Group (ICG) said in a report. As many as 1,300 Nigerians have died since January 2018 in a wave of violent killings that has swept the country's central states, according to the think-tank, which has documented the death toll arising from conflicts in the country. Boko Haram fighters have waged a decade-long war in Nigeria's north using calculated attacks that have killed thousands and displaced millions internally. But in its report released on July 26, 2018, the ICG said the escalating pastoral conflict in Nigeria's Middle Belt -- largely due to land-use disputes -- is worse than attacks this year by Boko Haram.

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<sup>22</sup> Times Live, July 24, 2018, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/africa/2018-07-24-nigerian-senators-dump-buhari-for-main-opposition/>

<sup>23</sup> CNN, July 27, 2018, <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/07/27/africa/nigeria-herdsmen-boko-haram-report/index.html>

## Central Asia

- **Kazakhstan Foreign Minister Visits US**

At the invitation of the US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo, Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Kairat Abdrakhmanov visited the US to attend the first-ever Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom held on 25-26 July in Washington.<sup>24</sup> On the sidelines, he held meetings with US authorities, including First Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan and Ambassador at-Large for International Religious Freedoms Sam Brownback. The leaders discussed the enhancement of political, trade and economic relations between the two countries. They were updated on the implementation of the agreements made during Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to Washington in January 2018.<sup>25</sup>

- **Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Visits Tajikistan**

Palestinian National Authority Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki met with Foreign Minister of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Muhriddin in Dushanbe on 26 July 2018. The two Ministers discussed issues related to further increase bilateral cooperation in economic, cultural and scientific fields.<sup>26</sup> They also explored the establishment of joint intergovernmental commission for trade and economic cooperation.

In recent times, Tajikistan's relations with Iran have been tense ever since Tehran hosted the self-exiled Tajik leader Muhiddin Kabiri in a religious conference in 2015. Its relationship with other Gulf Arab countries has been increasing over the years. Apart from the visit of the Palestinian Authority delegation to Tajikistan, humanitarian and charitable delegations from Saudi Arabia and Qatar also visiting the country in July.<sup>27</sup>

- Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Tajikistan said in an interview that Riyadh has granted more than US\$ 200 million aid to Dushanbe over the years.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The Qazaq Times, "Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister visits the United States," 26 July 2018, <https://qazaqtimes.com/en/article/43707>

<sup>25</sup> The Times of Central Asia, "Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister visits United States to boost ties," 26 July 2018, <https://www.timesca.com/index.php/news/20048-kazakhstan-s-foreign-minister-visits-united-states-to-boost-ties>

<sup>26</sup> Asia-Plus, "Tajik, Palestinian foreign ministers meet in Dushanbe to discuss cooperation," 27 July 2018, <https://www.asiaplus.tj/en/news/tajikistan/politics/20180727/tajik-palestinian-foreign-ministers-meet-in-dushanbe-to-discuss-cooperation>

<sup>27</sup> Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, "Visits of foreign delegations (18-29 July 2018)," <http://www.mfa.tj/index.php?l=en&cat=94&art=3532>

<sup>28</sup> Eurasianet, "Saudis brag about giving Tajikistan \$200M in aid," 28 July 2018, <https://eurasianet.org/s/saudis-brag-about-giving-tajikistan-200m-in-aid>

## China

- **Official Spokesperson's response to media reports on situation in Doklam purported to be made by a US Official**

In response to media reports on situation in Doklam purported to be made by a US Official, the Official Spokesperson of Ministry of External Affairs, GOI on July 26, 2018 said:

“The press reports attributing remarks on Doklam to a US official is incorrect. The reference to Doklam was made by Congresswoman Anne Wagner in the form of a question posed to the senior State Department Official Alice G. Wells. Ms Wells, in her reply, made no reference to the situation in Doklam and said that India is vigorously defending its northern borders and this is a subject of concern to India. I would reiterate that since the disengagement of Indian and Chinese border personnel in the Doklam area on 28 August 2017, there have been no new developments at the face-off site and its vicinity. The status quo prevails in this area.”<sup>29</sup>

- **Xi says China to boost closer development partnership with India**

Chinese President Xi Jinping said on July 26 that China is willing to consolidate and develop a closer development partnership with India. Xi made the remarks while meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the 10th BRICS summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. It is their third meeting in three months.

“We have provided a top-level design for bilateral ties in a macroscopic perspective and a timely fashion, which is conducive to mobilizing the positive elements of all sectors in both countries and uniting the wills of the 2.6 billion people of the two countries, so as to form a force that would push bilateral ties into the future,” he said.

The Indian side is ready to keep close dialogue and communication with the Chinese side, deepen cooperation in various fields, properly address differences, strengthen cooperation within a multilateral framework, and jointly handle such challenges facing developing countries and emerging market countries as protectionism and global market fluctuations to advance their closer development partnership, P M Modi said.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Media Briefing available at [http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/30191/Official\\_Spokespersons\\_response\\_to\\_media\\_reports\\_on\\_situation\\_in\\_Doklam\\_purported\\_to\\_be\\_made\\_by\\_a\\_US\\_Official](http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/30191/Official_Spokespersons_response_to_media_reports_on_situation_in_Doklam_purported_to_be_made_by_a_US_Official)

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1580861.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1580861.shtml)

- **Chinese Defense Minister to visit India in sign of recovering military ties: *Global Times***

Chinese State Councilor and Defense Minister General Wei Fenghe will visit India this year in a sign of recovering military relations after the Doklam standoff last year.

“Defense departments of China and India are communicating about the visit. Related information will be released at proper time,” defense ministry spokesman Ren Guoqiang said at a routine press conference on July 26. The visit will be Wei’s third overseas trip since he became defense minister in March. India is his fourth overseas destination. He visited Russia and the Republic of Belarus in April and Cambodia in June.<sup>31</sup>

- **Senior Chinese, Vietnamese military leaders vow to promote bilateral ties**

Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) of the People’s Republic of China General Zhang Youxia met with the visiting Senior Lieutenant General Luong Cuong, member of the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee of Vietnam, permanent member of Vietnam’s Central Military Commission and director of the General Department of Politics of the Vietnam’s People’s Army (VPA), in Beijing on July 25, 2018.

The Chinese military expressed willingness to join hands with the Vietnamese military to implement the consensus reached by the leaders of the two parties and the two countries. General Zhang added that both sides will maintain strategic contact, promote practical cooperation and properly deal with differences, so as to contribute to the in-depth development of the China-Vietnam comprehensive strategic partnership.<sup>32</sup>

- **China, Serbia vow to boost military cooperation**

Vice Chairman of China’s Central Military Commission (CMC) General Zhang Youxia met with Defense Minister of the Republic of Serbia Aleksandar Vulin in Beijing on July 25. During the meeting, General Zhang Youxia said China has always viewed the bilateral relationship from a strategic and long-term perspective, and is willing to work with Serbia to further consolidate mutual political trust, expand cooperation at all levels and in all fields, and build a community of shared destiny and interests for the benefit of the two peoples. General Zhang underscored the need to explore ways to enhance cooperation between the two

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1112605.shtml>

<sup>32</sup> “Senior Chinese, Vietnamese military leaders vow to promote bilateral ties”, China Military Online, July 27, 2018, [http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-07/27/content\\_8101455.htm](http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-07/27/content_8101455.htm).

militaries and make the bilateral military ties an accelerator for the development of the relationship.

Vulin said Serbia is committed to developing the Serbia-China comprehensive strategic partnership and looks forward to deepening cooperation in various fields including defense and military affairs and promoting the sustained and sound development of relations between the two countries and the two militaries.<sup>33</sup>

- **China, Uganda pledge to deepen bilateral cooperation**

Chinese President Xi Jinping said on July 26 that China is ready to deepen friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields with Uganda in an all-round way. Xi made the remarks when meeting with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, on the sidelines of the 10th BRICS summit held in Johannesburg on July 25-27.

Xi called on the two countries to maintain the momentum of high-level exchanges and continue to staunchly support each other on issues of their core interests and major concern. Xi also urged Uganda to keep close communication on major international and regional hotspot issues and safeguard the common interests of the two countries and developing countries as a whole.

Museveni said Uganda hopes to deepen practical cooperation with China in such areas as industrial parks, infrastructure construction and electric power and welcomes more Chinese companies to invest and develop in Uganda.<sup>34</sup>

- **World's largest container vessels under construction in Shanghai**

On July 26, 2018, construction of two container ships with the carrying capacity of 22,000 TEUs has started. The two are among nine 22,000 TEU vessels deal signed by French container shipping operator CMA CGM and China State Shipbuilding Corporation (CSSC) in September 2017.

The vessels will be built by Shanghai-based Jiangnan Shipyard and Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding. Besides, they are also the world's first giant container ships propelling with engines burning liquefied natural gas, a technology breakthrough for environmental protection. The two vessels are expected to be delivered in 2019.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> “China, Serbia vow to boost military cooperation”, July 27, 2018, [http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-07/27/content\\_8101532.htm](http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-07/27/content_8101532.htm).

<sup>34</sup> “China, Uganda pledge to deepen bilateral cooperation”, *The People's Daily*, July 27, 2018, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0727/c90000-9485464.html>.

<sup>35</sup> “World's largest container vessels under construction in Shanghai”, *The People's Daily*, July 27, 2018, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0727/c90000-9485481.html>.



## European Union

- **Hungarian Prime Minister Orban Criticized the EU**

In a speech to ethnic Hungarians in Romania, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has criticized the European Union (EU). He claimed the western political elite had failed to protect the EU from Muslim immigration. He reportedly called the European Commission a “symbol of failure.” He also said, “Europe’s leaders are inadequate, they are unable to defend Europe from immigration.”<sup>36</sup>

- **John Bolton’s Meeting with Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz**

Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz met with US National Security Advisor John Bolton at the White House on 26 July 2018. As reported, they also talked about Polish-US military partnership, Russia’s planned Nord Stream 2 pipeline and preparation of Polish President Andrzej Duda’s visit to Washington.<sup>37</sup>

- **Polish President Andrzej Duda Signed Judicial Reform Legislation**

Polish President Andrzej Duda has signed judicial reform legislation into law. The EU, opposition parties in Poland and human rights group have criticized the law. They argue that it would enable ruling government to intervene in judiciary and undermine judicial independence and democracy. But the PiS party justifies the law and other judicial reforms. It argues that they would ‘make the courts more efficient and rid the judicial system of remaining communist influences.’ Reportedly, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, the leader of the PiS, said, “Without (judiciary) reforms, we cannot rebuild the Polish state so that it serves its citizens.” Thousands of Poles demonstrated across the country.<sup>38</sup>

- **European Commission expands disembarkation centre concept (Dr. Surabhi)**

To facilitate the processing of those being disembarked in EU, and differentiate between those in need of international protection and irregular migrants, the EU would establish ‘controlled centres’ in the EU. The controlled centre will be operated by the host member state with full support from the EU and EU agencies and their main features would include: full operation support, rapid, secure and effective processing and full financial support. The idea of regional disembarkation

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<sup>36</sup> Hungary's Viktor Orban calls for right-wing union in Europe, DW, July 28, 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/hungarys-viktor-orban-calls-for-right-wing-union-in-europe/a-44865138>; Hungary's PM Viktor Orban attacks the EU, euronews, July 28, 2018, <http://www.euronews.com/2018/07/28/hungary-s-pm-viktor-orban-attacks-the-eu>

<sup>37</sup> US official confirms US, Polish presidents will meet, Radio Poland, July 28, 2018, <http://www.thenews.pl/1/10/Artykul/375199,US-official-confirms-US-Polish-presidents-will-meet>

<sup>38</sup> Protests staged across Poland as controversial judicial reform law signed, DW, July 27, 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/protests-staged-across-poland-as-controversial-judicial-reform-law-signed/a-44845875>

centre in association with IOM and UNHCR is also being explored for quick and safe disembarkation on either sides of the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>39</sup> Commissioner Avramopoulos said: "Now more than ever we need common, European solutions on migration. We are ready to support Member States and third countries in better cooperating on disembarkation of those rescued at sea. But for this to work immediately on the ground, we need to be united – not just now, but also in the long run. We need to work towards sustainable solutions."<sup>40</sup>

- **Greek Fires- Criminal Investigation Launched**

The Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has assumed political responsibility for massive wildfires that devastated a coastal resort near Athens leaving many dead. The government has faced strong criticism over its handling of the disaster and the opposition had termed it as “deplorable spectacle of rejecting any responsibility for the fire” and instead blaming it on illegal construction in the surrounding areas. The Deputy Citizen Protection Minister Nikos Toskas remarked that “a serious piece of information has led us to opening an investigation into possible criminal acts over the blazes.”<sup>41</sup> 86 victims have been identified so far and the bodies of victims burnt beyond recognition will undergo identification procedures relying on DNA samples of the family members.

- **EU tones down hopes of Mercosur deal by September (dr. ankita)**

Despite EU and Mercosur countries remaining committed to reaching a trade agreement, the European Commission did not endorse the South American bloc’s target to reach an agreement by September, as substantial gaps remain between the two sides. Argentine Foreign Minister Jorge Faurie had said, following two talks of talks in between EU and Mercosur minister in Brussels, that a political agreement could be signed by September. But a Commission spokesperson said on 23 July that “it is too early to say when a political deal could be reached”. The spokesperson added that there is “still important work to be done” in areas such as cars and car parts, geographical indications, maritime services and dairy. In addition, French Finance minister Bruno Le Maire recalled on the sidelines of the G20 ministerial meeting over the weekend in Buenos Aires (Argentina) that differences remain on issues such as agriculture and livestock. According to EU and Mercosur countries, a political agreement has been within reach over the past months. Last year, Brussels eyed closing a deal by the end of 2017 given the importance of the partnership and the political calendar. A deal would be eight times the size of the trade agreement reached with Canada (CETA) and four times

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<sup>39</sup> European Commission, 24 July 2018, URL: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/managing-migration-commission-expands-disembarkation-controlled-centre-concepts\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/managing-migration-commission-expands-disembarkation-controlled-centre-concepts_en)

<sup>40</sup> European Commission, 24 July 2018, URL: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-18-4629\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-4629_en.htm)

<sup>41</sup> The Telegraph, 27 July 2018, URL: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/07/27/greek-fires-alexis-tsipras-assumes-political-responsibility/>

the volume of the recent deal signed with Japan, which is currently the EU's largest.<sup>42</sup>

- **France, Spain, Portugal up energy links**

France, Spain and Portugal agreed on 27 July to build an undersea power line in the Bay of Biscay as they up electricity links aimed at helping the Iberian peninsula out of its energy isolation. Speaking after a meeting in Lisbon, the three country leaders welcomed a deal signed on the sidelines of the gathering on financing construction of the 370-kilometre (230-mile) long power line linking France to Spain. It's "a very important step," said Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa. The European Commission will finance 30% of the project by bringing €578 million to the table, an unprecedented amount in the European Union for an energy project. The power line should start operating in 2025, almost doubling the capacity for electricity exchange between France and Spain. Spain and Portugal have long called for an end to their isolation from European networks of electricity and gas distribution. Portugal will organise early next year a summit dedicated solely to energy interconnectors, as lawmakers work to end the Iberian peninsula's energy market isolation.<sup>43</sup>

- **Irish PM tours EU capitals as fears of hard Brexit grow**

Irish European countries are less conscious of the harmful ramifications Brexit threatens to impose on Ireland, so the visits are purposely arranged to explain why their support is vital. On Wednesday (25 July), the Taoiseach will travel on to Italy, where he will visit the Venice Biennale, before a meeting in Rome on Thursday (26 July) with the new Italian prime minister, Giuseppe Conte.<sup>44</sup>

- **EU and US kiss and make up on trade**

The US will not impose tariffs on EU cars and might take back ones on steel and aluminium, while the EU will buy more US soybeans and gas, according to a deal in Washington on Wednesday (25 July). "We met right here at the White House to launch a new phase in the relationship between the United States and the European Union - a phase of close friendship, of strong trade relations," US leader Donald Trump said, unveiling the accord next to European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker. The US would not do anything "against the spirit of this agreement", Trump said, alluding to his previous threat to impose EU car tariffs. In return, "the European Union is going to start, almost immediately, to buy a lot of soybeans ... from our farmers," Trump said. There was an "understanding", the EU's Juncker said, that "as long as we're negotiating, unless one party would stop the negotiations, we will hold off further tariffs [on cars]". The deal came amid

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<sup>42</sup>Euractiv, 23 July 2018, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/eu-tones-down-expectations-of-mercosur-deal-by-september/>

<sup>43</sup> Euractiv, 28 July 2018, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy/news/france-spain-portugal-up-energy-links/>

<sup>44</sup> Euractiv, 23 July 2018, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/uk-europe/news/irish-pm-tours-eu-capitals-as-fears-of-hard-brexit-grow/>

fears that Trump would escalate his EU trade war and, more profoundly, that he wanted to harm the EU and Nato.<sup>45</sup>

- **EU rejects Britain's key elements of special customs plan after Brexit**

EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier rejected key elements of Britain's new trade proposals on Thursday (26 July) even as he and his new British counterpart Dominic Raab voiced a shared determination to reach a deal by October. However, Barnier said he believes British negotiators he met in Brussels "understood our concerns" about the border between EU member Ireland and the British province of Northern Ireland. The EU proposes that Northern Ireland stay aligned with the remaining 27 bloc members after Brexit as part of a "backstop", or insurance policy to avoid the reimposition of border checks and a risk to Irish peace gains. But Britain, fearing the EU proposal would break up its territory, has suggested instead that the whole country remain aligned with the EU in certain areas, only until the end of 2021. Barnier made clear British offers to collect customs duties for the EU as part of efforts to avoid friction on Northern Ireland's new EU border had failed to convince already sceptical Europeans. Britain is set to leave the bloc on 30 March 2019, but the two sides want to strike the divorce agreement by late October in order to give parliaments enough time to endorse a deal.<sup>46</sup>

## East Asia /South-East Asia

### (ASEAN, Malaysia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Phillipines)

- **Malaysia to repeal its Security Offences [Special Measures] Act (SOSMA)**

The PM of Malaysia Dr Mahathir Mohamad in a statement on July 22 said that the government will repeal the tough security law used to detain government critics without charge introduced by the former government. Leading pro-democracy activists were among those arrested using SOSMA, introduced in 2012 purportedly to combat security threats from extremists. This allowed for suspects to be detained without charge for 28 days and can incur a lengthy prison sentence.

- **China donates military equipments to the Philippines**

China has donated four 12-metre-long boats and 30 rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) launchers to the Philippines. The donation, which follows the provision last year of about 6,000 assault rifles and hundreds of sniper rifles, also included small arms and ammunition, said Navy spokesman Commander Jonathan Zata. According to the spokesman Mr Zata, the Chinese rifles went to the Philippine National Police (PNP), helping to fill a shortfall after United States legislators

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<sup>45</sup>EU Observer, 26 July 2018, <https://euobserver.com/economic/142469>

<sup>46</sup>Euractiv, 27 July 2018, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/uk-europe/news/eu-rejects-britains-key-elements-of-special-customs-plan-after-brexite/>

blocked the sale of about 26,000 M4 rifles to the police in 2016; amid concerns about the US arming a police force accused of widespread human rights abuses during Mr Duterte's fierce war on drugs, which has killed thousands of Filipinos. China's donation is part of a new wave of diplomacy to engage a country with which Beijing has a bitter history of territorial disputes in the South China Sea. However, Beijing's donations so far remain small compared with arms transfers from the US, a defence treaty ally with the Philippines since the 1950s. Washington has in the past five years provided 15 billion peso (S\$384 million) of military aid, including drones, ships, surveillance planes and assault rifles.

- **US House of Representative passes the Cambodia Democracy Act of 2018**

The US House of Representatives with a bipartisan support on July 25, passed the Cambodia Democracy Act of 2018, which among other measures will allow for the imposition of stiff financial sanctions on Prime Minister Hun Sen, his family members, military elites and senior officials from the ruling Cambodian People's Party. The United States has termed the July 29, national elections as not legitimate. The US also warned against the country's lurch away from a tentative democracy and towards full autocracy. The Act's provisions could also prohibit US citizens from engaging in financial transactions, including business relations, with certain sanctioned Cambodians who may in future be denied entrance to the US and have their US-based assets frozen. The Act must still pass the Senate. If it does, US President Donald Trump will determine which Cambodian individuals should be sanctioned, if any punitive measures are imposed at all.

- **Indonesia and Malaysia to boost cooperation, against EU's move to phase out the use of bio-oil**

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi after meeting her Malaysian counterpart, Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, on July 23, stated that both countries will boost cooperation to counter the European Union's move to phase out the use of the bio-fuel in transport fuels.

## **Oceania**

- **2018 Australia-U.S. Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN)**

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defense James Mattis hosted Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop and Minister for Defence Marise Payne on July 23-24 for the annual Australia-U.S. Ministerial Consultations ("AUSMIN") at Stanford University's Hoover Institution in Palo Alto, California. The meeting highlighted that the U.S.-Australia alliance is steadfast and enduring, and underpinned by a deep alignment of mutual interests and shared values. The Secretaries and Ministers emphasized both nations' strong and deepening engagement in the Indo-Pacific for a secure, prosperous future. They made clear their commitment to work together – and with partners – to shape an Indo-Pacific that is open, inclusive, prosperous, and rules-based. The discussions were held to

deepen economic, military, science and technology, cooperation at various bilateral multilateral forums.<sup>47</sup>

- **Foreign Minister's Visit to Timor-Leste, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia**

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop will visit Timor-Leste, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia from 29 July to 7 August, to reaffirm Australia's commitment to remaining a leading partner to our regional neighbours in Southeast Asia. In Timor-Leste the treaty on establishing permanent maritime boundaries is planned to be concluded. In Singapore, she will be attending the East Asia Summit, ASEAN Regional Forum and Australia-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting. In Indonesia, the minister would be co-chairing with Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi the Bali Process Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. Also she will officially open the Australian Consulate-General in Surabaya, Indonesia's second largest city, to strengthen trade and investment links with Indonesia.<sup>48</sup>

- **Climate Action Pacific Partnership (CAPP) Conference held at Suva**

Climate Action Pacific Partnership (CAPP) Conference was held at 26-27 July in Suva, Fiji. Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama delivering the keynote address said that in the face of adversity, "the fight that ignites us is the Pacific spirit". He argued that Pacific Islands had demanded their rightful place at the table of climate negotiations. And they were asserting their moral authority as vulnerable states to drive the world to a more ambitious, more aggressive action.<sup>49</sup> At the closing session he argued that there is momentum in the Pacific to confront the climate change threat. The CAPP meeting the leaders explored various opportunities and challenges in relation to the actions they needed to take and the investments they needed to make in order to reach net-zero emissions as soon as possible, to protect our oceans and strengthen the resilience of Pacific countries.<sup>50</sup>

- **Fijian Navy Preps for the KAKADU Exercise**

The 20 Republic of Fiji Military Forces navy sailors onboard the *RFNS Kikau* are preparing for 'Exercise KAKADU'. Exercise KAKADU is a joint-enabled, biennial exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Navy and supported by the Royal Australian Air Force. The participants includes Australia, Canada, Fiji, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, Tonga, United States of America, and Vietnam. KAKADU is the Navy's premier maritime exercise,

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<sup>47</sup> [https://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2018/jb\\_mr\\_180724a.aspx](https://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2018/jb_mr_180724a.aspx)

<sup>48</sup> [https://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2018/jb\\_mr\\_180729.aspx](https://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2018/jb_mr_180729.aspx)

<sup>49</sup> <http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/07/27/pm-leaders-must-fight-climate-action-with-pacific-spirit/>

<sup>50</sup> <http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/07/28/pm-pacific-can-confront-threat/>

developing interoperability between nations in the maritime and air domains and providing training opportunities for maritime security and surveillance.<sup>51</sup>

## North America

### Canada

- **Harjit S. Sajjan: This government is showing NATO that Canada can be counted on**

Five years ago, the year 2013 marked a low-point for Canada and NATO. According to NATO reports, the Conservatives had cut Canadian military spending to an all-time low, below one per cent of GDP. To add insult to injury, then-prime minister Stephen Harper went a step further and withdrew Canada from NATO's Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) and Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) programs. Canadians and Europeans alike began to question whether Canada truly believed in the transatlantic military alliance. Fast forward to 2016 when we unveiled Canada's new defence policy — Strong, Secure, Engaged — reflecting our government's commitment to build strong international relationships with a once-in-a generation investment in our military. Through our policy, Canada is increasing annual defence spending to \$32.7 billion — a rise of more than 70 per cent over the next 10 years. What's more, strategic new investments in equipment will account for more than 30 per cent of our total defence spending by 2024-25, which well surpasses the NATO target of 20 per cent. But Canada's commitment to NATO is about much more than just dollars. Ahead of the recent summit of NATO leaders, Prime Minister Trudeau extended Canada's contribution to NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) through Operation REASSURANCE for another four years. Canada will continue to lead NATO's eFP Battle Group Latvia and will also increase the number of Canadian Forces members deployed to Latvia from 455 to 540.<sup>52</sup>

- **Canada to join Mexico, Japan, South Korea and the EU in auto tariff talks**

Canada will join Mexico and European and Asian auto-producing countries to plot strategy ahead of the potential imposition of tariffs on vehicles and auto parts exported to the United States. Japan and the European Union organized the meeting in Geneva, where vice and deputy ministers from Canada, the EU, Japan and South Korea will gather to talk about the punishing levies threatened by U.S. President Donald Trump. A Canadian government official told The Canadian Press on Sunday that deputy international trade minister Timothy Sargent would attend the meeting on Canada's behalf. Trump has threatened to impose tariffs under

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<sup>51</sup> <http://fjijisun.com.fj/2018/07/27/pm-leaders-must-fight-climate-action-with-pacific-spirit/>

<sup>52</sup> Harjit S. Sajjan, "Harjit S. Sajjan: This government is showing NATO that Canada can be counted on," <https://nationalpost.com/opinion/harjit-s-sajjan-this-government-is-shown-nato-that-canada-can-be-counted-on>, Accessed on 30 July 2018.

Section 232 of the decades-old U.S. Trade Expansion Act. The legislation allows the president, under certain circumstances, to impose duties recommended by his commerce secretary under the notion that the goods being imported are a threat to national security. Just as it did after the U.S. imposed hefty tariffs on steel and aluminium imports from Canada and other nations, the Trudeau government has said it would respond to auto tariffs with its own countermeasures. The Canadian Automobile Dealers Association has warned that "dollar-for-dollar" retaliatory levies would have a much more significant effect on Canada's auto sector than counter-tariffs on aluminium and steel.<sup>53</sup>

- **Trudeau's cabinet shuffle shows where Liberals think 2019 election will be decided**

A lot of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's cabinet shuffle look like they were tailor-made with the 2019 vote in mind. But will the changes pay off for the Liberals? In all, 11 ministers either changed jobs or were added to cabinet, increasing the size of the ministry from 30 to 35, including the prime minister — the largest it has been under Trudeau. That still makes it smaller than the cabinet of 39 ministers Stephen Harper took into the 2015 federal election. But the scale of the shuffle suggests the Liberals felt some significant changes were needed ahead of next year's date with voters. First-term governments have historically been much more likely than not to get a second term. But polls suggest the Liberals are far from being guaranteed re-election: If the current numbers are replicated in the October 2019 election, the party would only have a two-in-three chance of winning the most seats and just a one-in-five chance of a majority. A few adjustments to increase those odds makes sense — and it starts in the one part of the country that has decided election after election.<sup>54</sup>

## The United States

- **Trump's Economic 'Miracle' May Have Already Peaked**

In declaring that the U.S. economy has entered a new era of faster growth, President Donald Trump is dismissing signals from financial markets and the outlook of economists from Wall Street to the Federal Reserve. Flanked by his top economic advisers, Trump delivered remarks on the South Lawn of the White House to celebrate a report that the economy expanded in the second quarter at the fastest pace in four years. He said the economy is on track to reach an annual growth rate of more than 3 percent. Investors don't seem as impressed. The dollar fell, stocks were little changed and Treasuries gained after the Commerce

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<sup>53</sup> The Canadian Press, "Canada to join Mexico, Japan, South Korea and the EU in auto tariff talks," <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-auto-tariffs-mexico-japan-south-korea-eu-1.4766361>, Accessed on 30 July 2018.

<sup>54</sup> Éric Grenier, "Trudeau's cabinet shuffle shows where Liberals think 2019 election will be decided," <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/grenier-shuffle-election-1.4750085>, Accessed on 30 July 2018.



Department reported that gross domestic product grew 4.1 percent, slightly short of the consensus estimate. The president had built up expectations by predicting on Thursday that the data would show the economy in “terrific shape.” But few economists expect the U.S. can attain the president’s goal of sustained growth of 3 percent. Many analysts believe growth will weaken as the effects fade from the tax cuts and a government spending increase.<sup>55</sup>

- **India plans to buy missile shield from U.S.**

India is in talks with the U.S. to procure an advanced air defence system to defend the National Capital Region (NCR) from aerial attacks. The process for procuring the National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System-II (NASAMS-II), estimated at \$1 billion, has been initiated. India is deploying a multi-tiered air defence network to fully secure its airspace from incoming fighter aircraft, missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). The official said this system would complement other systems such as the medium and long-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems under procurement. India is also in an advanced stage of talks with Russia for the procurement of very long range S-400 air defence systems. Apart from these imports, India is also developing an indigenous Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system. Phase-I of the BMD is expected to be deployed soon.<sup>56</sup>

- **Jim Mattis the unflappable: From Russia to Iran to Turkey, all is well**

There was bipartisan blowback after the Helsinki summit between President Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, where Mattis was not invited, but Mattis said that’s not affected him. Later in the Pentagon’s Correspondents Corridor, Mattis continued to insist that nothing the president has done or said has changed his marching orders in Syria or anywhere else. What about Trump’s threat that Iran will “suffer consequences the likes of which few throughout history have ever suffered before,” should it ever threaten the U.S. again? Has that resulted in any change in military posture in the Persian Gulf? “Nothing. Nothing has changed,” Mattis said. “We work very closely, as you know, with the combined 5th Fleet.” Right now, he said, U.S., Kuwaiti, Bahraini, Saudi, and Emirati ships are out conducting routine counter piracy patrols. “Nothing has changed for us,” he insisted. Well surely the spat with NATO ally Turkey over its failure to release an American pastor is putting strain on the U.S.-Turkey relationship. After all, Trump is threatening sanctions, accusing Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of renegeing on a deal.<sup>57</sup>

- **Pompeo Defends Trump With ‘Proof’ of Administration’s Actions vs. Russia**

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<sup>55</sup> Andrew Mayeda and Jennifer Epstein, “Trump’s Economic ‘Miracle’ May Have Already Peaked,” <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-07-27/trump-claims-victory-as-gdp-grows-at-fastest-pace-since-2014>, Accessed on 30 July 2018.

<sup>56</sup> ---, “India plans to buy missile shield from U.S.,” <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-plans-to-buy-missile-shield-from-us/article24547175.ece>, Accessed on 30 July 2018.

<sup>57</sup> Jamie McIntyre, “Jim Mattis the unflappable: From Russia to Iran to Turkey, all is well,” <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/jim-mattis-the-unflappable-from-russia-to-iran-to-turkey-all-is-well>, Accessed on 30 July 2018.

Mike Pompeo, the secretary of state, told skeptical senators on Wednesday that the Trump administration has taken a truckload of punitive actions against Moscow as “proof” it is tough on Russia as the White House walked back an invitation for President Vladimir V. Putin to visit Washington this fall. Yet during a combative three-hour Senate hearing, Mr. Pompeo repeatedly declined to provide specifics about a one-on-one meeting between President Trump and Mr. Putin last week in Helsinki, Finland — including the possibility of relaxing sanctions on Moscow, military cooperation in Syria or the future of Crimea. Mr. Pompeo angrily dismissed questions about the deep gulf between the administration’s tough policies on Russia and Mr. Trump’s own warm statements about Mr. Putin. And for the first time, Mr. Pompeo acknowledged that North Korea is continuing to produce nuclear fuel for its weapons program, even as the administration claims progress toward the goal of denuclearization.<sup>58</sup>

## Mexico

- **Mexico’s new leftwing leader may turn out to be a fiscal hawk**

After a turbulent 2018 for emerging market investors, Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s landslide win in Mexico’s presidential elections this month provided a rare moment of predictability. His landslide victory followed a campaign that pledged to root out corruption, boost infrastructure spending and provide greater support to the “poor and forgotten”. The market reacted well to Mr López Obrador’s victory in the July 1 vote. Mexico-focused funds reported net inflows of \$103m in the week to July 4, according to data provider EPFR. While flows in recent months have been choppy, this was the tenth occasion that weekly inflows had topped \$100m this year, compared with just once in 2017. It is also encouraging given the hefty outflows from emerging markets funds overall in the past three months as rising US interest rates, a strengthening dollar and anxiety over a brewing trade war put assets under pressure. Mr López Obrador, however, whose Morena party also swept the board in Mexico’s lower and upper houses, does not assume power until December 1. While that may seem distant, investors cannot afford to sit on their hands. Amplifying its importance is the fact that Turkey and South Africa, two other major markets in the index, have either lost their investment grade status or been subjected to a series of cuts, narrowing options for international investors who require a certain quality grade. In comparison, Mexico is on a firmer footing. One of the top considerations for investors is how spending plans will be financed — how Mr López Obrador will make good on his pledge to eradicate corruption and the outcome of Nafta renegotiations of the North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta).<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Julie Hirschfeld Davis, “Pompeo Defends Trump With ‘Proof’ of Administration’s Actions vs. Russia,” <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/25/us/politics/senate-pompeo-trump-putin-north-korea.html>, Accessed on 30 July 2018.

<sup>59</sup> Jennifer Thompson, “Mexico’s new leftwing leader may turn out to be a fiscal hawk,” <https://www.ft.com/content/594f1bae-8fe6-11e8-b639-7680cedcc421>, Accessed on 30 July 2018.

- **Officials agree to step up NAFTA talks; August conclusion possible: Peña Nieto**

President Enrique Peña Nieto is optimistic that an updated North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) could be reached in August after Mexican and United States officials agreed to step up talks. Speaking at an industry event in Mexico City, Peña Nieto said there is “frankly a very promising horizon” with regard to concluding a deal in the short term. Peña Nieto also said that including members of president-elect Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s transition team in the NAFTA renegotiation process created an atmosphere of both calm and confidence both domestically and in the United States and Canada. Jesús Seade, whom López Obrador has tapped to be his chief trade negotiator, accompanied Economy Secretary Ildefonso Guajardo and Foreign Affairs Secretary Luis Videgaray to Washington D.C. this week for talks with United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer.<sup>60</sup>

- **Mexico's New President Obrador Calls on President Trump to Resume NAFTA Negotiations**

Mexico president-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador called on U.S. President Donald Trump to pursue renewed North American Free Trade Agreement negotiations aimed at a final agreement including all three countries in the pact. In a letter to Trump, delivered July 13 and read aloud by his proposed foreign minister Marcelo Ebrard at a press conference, Lopez Obrador said U.S. and Mexican administrations should work together on key themes including trade. Other areas mentioned by Lopez Obrador included migration, development and security. Lopez Obrador said that his transition team would begin working with the current government’s negotiators. The letter also called on the U.S. to work with Mexico and Central American countries on a development plan that would address the root causes of migration. The initiative would try to tackle poverty and violence that forced people to migrate in the first place, and strengthen borders. He suggested a fund that would foster development in the region. Lopez Obrador said the Trump administration has received the letter, and a response is expected soon.<sup>61</sup>

## Latin America and the Caribbean

### Argentina

- **From a space station in Argentina, China expands its reach in Latin America**

The centerpiece of a \$50 million satellite and space mission control station built by the Chinese military in Patagonia. The isolated base is one of the most striking

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<sup>60</sup> ----, “Officials agree to step up NAFTA talks; August conclusion possible: Peña Nieto,” <https://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/officials-agree-to-step-up-nafta-talks/>, Accessed on 30 July 2018.

<sup>61</sup> Justin Villamil, “Mexico's New President Obrador Calls on President Trump to Resume NAFTA Negotiations,” <http://time.com/5345472/mexico-president-obrador-trump-nafta/>, Accessed on 30 July 2018

symbols of Beijing's long push to transform Latin America and shape its future for generations to come — often in ways that directly undermine the United States' political, economic and strategic power in the region. The station began operating in March, playing a pivotal role in China's audacious expedition to the far side of the moon — an endeavour that Argentine officials say they are elated to support. But the way the base was negotiated — in secret, at a time when Argentina desperately needed investment — and concerns that it could enhance China's intelligence gathering capabilities in the hemisphere have set off a debate in Argentina about the risks and benefits of being pulled into China's orbit. For much of the past decade, the United States has paid little attention to its backyard in the Americas. Instead, it declared a pivot toward Asia, hoping to strengthen economic, military and diplomatic ties as part of the Obama administration's strategy to constrain China. All the while, China has been discreetly carrying out a far-reaching plan of its own across Latin America. It has vastly expanded trade, bailed out governments, built enormous infrastructure projects, strengthened military ties and locked up tremendous amounts of resources, hitching the fate of several countries in the region to its own.<sup>62</sup>

## Brazil

- **Brazil's Military Strides Into Politics, by the Ballot or by Force**

Members of Brazil's armed forces, who have largely stayed out of political life since the end of the military dictatorship 30 years ago, are making their biggest incursion into politics in decades, with some even warning of a military intervention. Retired generals and other former officers with strong ties to the military leadership are mounting a sweeping election campaign, backing about 90 military veterans running for an array of posts — including the presidency — in national elections this October. The effort is necessary, they argue, to rescue the nation from an entrenched leadership that has mismanaged the economy, failed to curb soaring violence and brazenly stolen billions of dollars through corruption. And if the ballot box does not bring change quickly enough, some prominent former generals warn that military leaders may feel compelled to step in and reboot the political system by force. The military's push into politics is a major shift — and for many Brazilians, a worrisome one. The country's military dictatorship lasted 21 years before ending in 1985. Since then, Brazil, Latin America's largest country, has experienced its longest stretch of democratic rule. Many are fiercely protective of the separation between politics and the military, guarding against any potential slide toward authoritarian rule.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ernesto Londoño, "From a space station in Argentina, China expands its reach in Latin America," <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/from-a-space-station-in-argentina-china-expands-its-reach-in-latin-america/articleshow/65189839.cms>, Accessed on 30 July 2018.

<sup>63</sup> Ernesto Londoño and Manuela Andreoni, "Brazil's Military Strides Into Politics, by the Ballot or by Force," <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/21/world/americas/brazils-election-military.html>, Accessed on 30 July 2018.

## CARICOM

- **CARICOM Must Exploit US-Canada Trade Spat**

Canada is an important trading partner of Jamaica and other CARICOM member states in goods and services. With Canada and some CARICOM member states being former colonies of Britain and members of the Commonwealth, trade between them dates back over centuries. Canada and CARICOM both have in common the USA as a principal trading partner because of proximity and history. Developments in US-Canada trade relations, therefore, are of interest to us in Jamaica and the Caribbean. The lesson for the Caribbean from the Canada-US trade relationship is that although the US remains a near and large market, CARICOM countries should seek to maintain and better utilise access to existing markets, such as Canada, and seek new markets. The USA has a trade surplus with CARICOM of more than US\$4.6 billion, but this does not guarantee that the current US administration, with unclear/shifting trade policies, will continue to be sympathetic to the development needs of the region.<sup>64</sup>

## Cuba

- **Cuba's president changes style not substance in first 100 days**

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel has engaged in a nonstop series of public appearances during his first 100 days in office, stopping everywhere across the island nation in an apparent bid to consolidate his leadership position. But the Castro dynasty is still calling practically all the shots. Upon taking office on April 19, some had hoped he might move quickly to breathe new life into reforms aimed at modernizing one of the world's last Communist-run countries. But the 58-year-old hand-picked successor of Raul Castro has demonstrated limited room for maneuver in what analysts have called a well orchestrated and only gradual transition from the octogenarian leaders of Cuba's 1959 revolution. In terms of substance and problem solving, however, Diaz-Canel has made good so far on the promise made in his inaugural address to defer to his 87-year-old predecessor on key issues. Last weekend, when Diaz-Canel announced his new cabinet, he retained two thirds of the ministers who served under Castro, including those in key posts like defense, trade and foreign relations. [L8N1UH0E5] Earlier this month new regulations defining the scope of the fledgling private sector were released, but the bulk were signed by Castro before he left office. [LiNiU6oFI] According to some, Diaz-Canel will only have full leeway to implement his own policies when he succeeds Castro in the powerful position as chief of Cuba's

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<sup>64</sup> Elizabeth Morgan, "CARICOM Must Exploit US-Canada Trade Spat," <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/commentary/20180729/elizabeth-morgan-caricom-must-exploit-us-canada-trade-spat>, Accessed on 30 July 2018.

Communist Party, which is expected to happen at the party's next congress in 2021<sup>65</sup>.

## Latin America

- **Latin America has embraced quotas for female political candidates**

Despite its macho reputation, or perhaps because of it, Latin America is unusually keen on quotas for female political candidates. In 1991 Argentina became the world's first country to require parties to nominate women in a minimum fraction of races. Today, of the 18 Spanish- or Portuguese-speaking countries in the Americas, 17 have a version of this policy. Elsewhere, around a third do. Five of the world's nine most female lower houses are Latin American. One of them is in Mexico, which on July 1st elected a near-even split of the sexes in both chambers. Many Latin countries got rid of dictatorships in the 1980s, creating a group of young democracies unbound by precedent. Yet just 5% of elected legislators that decade were female. Feminists, many of whom had campaigned for democracy, began painting political parties as sexist relics for failing to run female candidates. Argentina responded by imposing quotas on parties, and fellow Latin American states followed suit. Despite the quotas, women still hold a small share of the most important legislative jobs. Whether quotas yield laws that improve women's lives is harder to answer. Nonetheless, female lawmakers and academics insist that quotas have borne legislative fruit.<sup>66</sup>

## Peru

- **Peru president proposes referendum on political, judicial reform**

Peruvian President Martin Vizcarra challenged the opposition-run Congress on 28 July to call a referendum on judicial and political reforms aimed at uprooting systemic corruption in one of Latin America's most promising economies. Vizcarra called for a popular vote not just to fast track judicial reforms, but also to gauge support for a ban on private financing of political campaigns, an end to the re-election of lawmakers and the creation of a second chamber in Congress. "My government is making a decided bet on strengthening the state as a whole in order to defeat the criminal and corrupt mafias that feed off our country,"<sup>67</sup> Vizcarra said before Congress in his first Independence Day speech since taking office four months ago. "We need the input of all citizens. That's why we're convinced that a referendum is healthy for our democracy."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Sarah Marsh, Nelson Acosta, "Cuba's president changes style not substance in first 100 days," <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cuba-politics-analysis/cubas-president-changes-style-not-substance-in-first-100-days-idUSKBN1KH2LC>, Accessed on 30 July 2018.

<sup>66</sup> ----, "Latin America has embraced quotas for female political candidates," <https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2018/07/26/latin-america-has-embraced-quotas-for-female-political-candidates>, Accessed on 30 July 2018.

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-peru-vizcarra/peru-president-proposes-referendum-on-political-judicial-reform-idUSKBN1KI0LV>

<sup>68</sup> I.bid.

## Nicaragua

- **Nicaraguan government rounds up hundreds of young people suspected of protesting**

Following more than three months of civic resistance, Nicaragua President Daniel Ortega has intensified his pursuit of what he calls “terrorists,” rounding up hundreds he suspects of involvement in protests and sending thousands of others underground, mainly targeting the young people. Authorities stepped up the crackdown, detaining many on suspicion of taking part in marches against Ortega’s government or providing aid to those agitating against the president. Álvaro Leiva Sánchez, executive secretary of the Nicaraguan Association for Human Rights (ANPDH), criticised the government actions as “profound violation of human rights and repressive actions that should not be perpetrated by the state of Nicaragua”.<sup>69</sup>

## Ecuador

- **UK and Ecuador in talks on Wikileaks founder's fate**

The UK and Ecuador are holding ongoing talks over the fate of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange. Mr Assange, has been living in Ecuador's London embassy since 2012 when he was granted political asylum. Ecuador's President Lenin Moreno said on Friday that he was never "in favour" of Mr Assange's activities, and that both sides were in permanent contact. At an event in Madrid, Ecuador’s President said that any eviction of Mr Assange from the embassy must be carried out properly through dialogue.<sup>70</sup> Amidst the reports of ongoing talks with the UK government officials the Ecuador’s leader suggests that Assange’s departure is inevitable.<sup>71</sup>

## Russia

- **Russia and India**

India and Russia discussed a host of bilateral issues, including cooperation in defence during a meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin that ended here early on 27 July on the margins of the 2018 BRICS Summit. "Both leaders had a comprehensive discussion on bilateral issues of mutual interest, specially in trade and investment, energy, defence and tourism," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted. On 26 July, following the 10th BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) Summit here, a Johannesburg Declaration was issued, calling for

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<sup>69</sup> <https://cuencahighlife.com/nicaraguan-government-rounds-up-hundreds-of-young-people-suspected-of-protesting/>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44978460>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2018/jul/27/julian-assange-ecuador-embassy-future-london-wikileaks>

sustainable growth of global trade and expressing the determination to work together to strengthen multi-lateralism.<sup>72</sup>

- **Russia's Defence**

Russian President Vladimir Putin on 29 July during at the Main Naval Parade on Navy Day emphasized the role of the Russian Navy in fight against terrorism and for guaranteeing strategic parity.<sup>73</sup>

On 24 July, Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu stated that the NATO bloc cannot stand Russia being an independent player in international politics and tries to prevent this by boosting its military presence in Eastern Europe. He said that *“NATO member countries make various attempts to prevent Russia from becoming their geopolitical competitor, even more so because we have allies. They use various organizations, including the international ones and many spheres of human activity like politics, economy and even culture and sports. In such conditions, we demonstrate openness, friendliness and the absence of any sort of aggression against foreign countries. This was convincingly demonstrated by the World Cup 2018 football championship that ended on July 15.”*<sup>74</sup>

- **Russia's Domestic Politics**

On 27 July, two opposition leaders in Russia's parliament have urged the nation to switch to a two-party political system, similar to that of the US. They have pledged to launch a major social-democratic project to prove its viability.<sup>75</sup>

- **Russia and Germany**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel met Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Berlin on 24 July to discuss Syria, the situation in the Middle East and the conflict in Ukraine. No further details were given.<sup>76</sup>

- **Russia, China and US**

Speaking to reporters on 23 July, Russia's Ambassador Andrei Denisov to China said that South Korea and Japan undermine their own security by endorsing the

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<sup>72</sup>“India and Russia discuss defence on the margins of the 2018 BRICS Summit”, *Economic Times*, July 27, 2018. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-and-russia-discuss-defence-on-the-margins-of-the-2018-brics-summit/articleshow/65160871.cms> Accessed on July 30, 2018.

<sup>73</sup>“Putin highlights Navy's role for strategic parity, fight against terrorism”, *TASS*, July 29, 2018. <http://tass.com/defense/1015253> Accessed on July 29, 2018.

<sup>74</sup>“NATO cannot put up with Russia's increasing independence – Defense Minister Shoigu”, *RT*, July 24, 2018. <https://www.rt.com/politics/434132-nato-russia-shoigu-defense/> Accessed on July 30, 2018.

<sup>75</sup>“Russian opposition leaders launch campaign for two-party parliamentary system”, *RT*, July 27, 2018. <https://www.rt.com/politics/434451-russian-opposition-bipartisan-parliament/> Accessed on July 30, 2018.

<sup>76</sup>“Merkel meets Russia's head of military staff, Lavrov”, *Reuters*, July 24, 2018.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-russia/merkel-meets-russias-head-of-military-staff-lavrov-idUSKBN1KE1FN> Accessed on July 30, 2018.



US missile defense system's deployment to their territory, while Russia and China have to take retaliatory measures. In December 2017, Japan's government made a decision to expand the country's missile defense shield with two US-made Aegis Ashore missile defense systems, which are expected to be deployed to the north and southwest of the country's main Island of Honshu tentatively in 2023 to help ensure security from possible ballistic and cruise missile attacks. In June 2016, South Korea's government announced that it backs the deployment of the US Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense system.<sup>77</sup>

- **Russia and the US**

Leading US Senator Lindsey Graham (Republican, representing South Carolina) stated on 29 July in an interview with the Fox News channel that the restrictive measures currently used by the US against Russia do not work, and called for introducing extra sanctions against Moscow.<sup>78</sup>

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin on 27 July said that he was ready for another meeting with US President Donald Trump either in Washington or in the Russian capital of Moscow. "I am also ready to travel to Washington, if appropriate conditions are in place for our work," the Russian president stressed. Putin added that both he and President Trump share the intention of holding another meeting following this month's Helsinki summit.<sup>79</sup> He praised US President Donald Trump's commitment to fulfilling promises made during his presidential campaign. According to him, this is a unique quality of the current US president "because, as a rule, some leaders quickly forget what they had promised to the people once the elections are over." He added that "You can criticize him for what he is doing, and some people do criticize him, however, one thing remains absolutely clear - he is committed to fulfilling his campaign promises."<sup>80</sup>

## South Asia

### Afghanistan

- **Govt Asks IEC to Announce Presidential Election Date**

The office of the President on 22 July 2018 announced that the national Unity Government had asked the Independent Election Commission (IEC) to declare the date for the Presidential election of 2019 at the earliest. The official statement also

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<sup>77</sup>“Moscow vows to respond with China against US missile shield deployment to Japan, S.Korea”, TASS, July 23, 2018. <http://tass.com/politics/1014454> Accessed on July 30, 2018.

<sup>78</sup>“Sanctions against Russia do not work, new measures should be introduced - US senator”, TASS, July 30, 2018. <http://tass.com/world/1015292> Accessed on July 30, 2018.

<sup>79</sup>“Putin ‘ready’ for talks with Trump either in Moscow or in Washington”, TASS, July 27, 2018. <http://tass.com/politics/1015117> Accessed on July 30, 2018.

<sup>80</sup>“Putin praises Trump’s commitment to fulfilling campaign promises”, TASS, July 27, 2018. <http://tass.com/politics/1015103> Accessed on July 30, 2018.

revealed that President Ashraf Ghani discussed with IEC members and international partners such as UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Tadamichi Yamamoto about monitoring election process in the presence of political parties, civil society groups and international community. Both President Ghani and CEO Abdullah emphasized on the transparency during election.<sup>81</sup>

- **Joint Action Plan Finalized at Abu Dhabi Meeting**

The quadrilateral meeting between Afghanistan, United States, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates occurred on 25 July 2018. The meeting was attended by national security advisors of all countries. The meeting dealt with the issue of direct talks with the Taliban. Qadir Shah, National Security Adviser of President said, "The meeting focused on fighting terrorism, supporting peace talks and regional cooperation. And the joint action plan was approved after much discussion. It will be implemented once approved by the leaders of the (four) countries". Attended by Afghanistan's National Security Advisor Hanif Atmar, the daylong meeting decided to take a common framework for the identification of financing among terrorist groups. Earlier in March 2018, national security advisors of all these countries met in Washington.<sup>82</sup>

- **Dostum Home after 14 Months of Exile in Turkey**

On 22 July 2018, First Vice-President Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum returned to Afghanistan after spending 14 months in Turkey. He was welcomed by various political leaders like vice-president, Mohammad Sarwar Danish, second Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mohammad Muhaqiq and Atta Mohammad Noor along with large number of people. Abdul Rashid Dostum represents Junbish-i-Islami Afghanistan party that went on protests for last 20 days with regard to his return and release of Nizamuddin Qaisari, a Dostum's commander in Faryab province.<sup>83</sup>

- **Do More for Durable Political Settlement in Afghanistan, Gen. Votel to Pakistan**

Pakistan's role has been regarded as crucial to achieve long term peace in Afghanistan. Gen. Joseph Votel, Commander of the United State Central Command (CENTCOM) on 23 July 2018 while addressing a meeting said, "We continue to work closely with Pakistan to help them fulfill the important role that they have indicated they want to play. Now is the time for them to step forward, do more and be supportive." He also assured that US would extend funding to Afghan security forces till 2024 as declared on the recent NATO Summit. He mentioned, "This year, 29 of 39 NATO Allies and partners increased their military or financial commitments to the campaign. Significantly, we welcome our Gulf partners from the United Arab Emirates and Qatar to the Resolute Support mission as well".

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<sup>81</sup> Tolo News, 24 July 2018, [http://outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=21429](http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21429)

<sup>82</sup> Daily Outlook Afghanistan, 26 July 2018, [http://outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=21454](http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21454)

<sup>83</sup> Daily Outlook Afghanistan, 23 July 2018, [http://outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=21423](http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21423)

According to Gen. Joseph Votel , for the first time Afghan National Defense and Security Forces reorganised their forces by shifting 30,000 border police and Afghan National Civil Order Police from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Defense and began a Territorial Army project to provide security in local affairs.<sup>84</sup>

- **Afghan Traders Sign US\$68 Million Worth of Deals during Trade Mission**

India Afghanistan cooperation achieved a new impetus in terms of trade while 49 Afghan exporters attended the USAID Commercial Horticultural Agricultural Marketing Program (CHAMP), implemented by Roots of Peace, facilitated the trade event titled “Made in Afghanistan: Nature's Best” on July 13-14 2018. Economic Advisor to President Ghani, Ajmal Ahmadi and Afghan Ambassador to India Shaida Mohammad Abdali appreciated growing economic cooperation between both countries with Afghan traders signing of US\$68 million worth of deals for high-value agricultural products, such as pomegranates, saffron, apples, apricots, melons, grapes, nuts, and cherries. This whole meeting had prepared Afghan exporters for the upcoming second-annual “Passage to Prosperity” Trade and Investment Show which will take place in Mumbai to be held on 12-15, 2018, supported by The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI).<sup>85</sup>

## Bangladesh

- **BNP-Jamaat will destroy country if in power: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the BNP-Jamaat clique will destroy the country with their unbridled looting and corruption if they return to power. She also said that Khaleda Zia could not even restrain herself from embezzling orphans' money. “..They won't be able to give anything to people; they'll just engage themselves in looting and corruption.” The prime minister said the people of the country have no trust and faith in the BNP-Jamaat clique.<sup>86</sup>

- **BNP lodges complaints with EC**

Just a day before the balloting in Rajshahi, Sylhet and Barishal city corporation polls, opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) lodged various complaints with the election commission (EC) on Sunday (July 29) and urged it to take necessary steps for holding the polls in a credible and fair manner, reports UNB. A BNP delegation, led by party joint secretary general Mahbub Uddin Khokon, met chief election commissioner KM Nurul Huda at the EC secretariat in the capital

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<sup>84</sup> Daily Outlook Afghanistan, 24 July 2018, [http://outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=21430](http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21430)

<sup>85</sup> Daily Outlook Afghanistan, 24 July 2018, [http://outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=21432](http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21432)

<sup>86</sup> “BNP-Jamaat will destroy country if in power: PM,” *Daily Star*, July 28, 2018, <https://www.thedailystar.net/city/bnp-jamaat-will-destroy-country-if-power-pm-1612387>, accessed on July 28, 2018.

Sunday (July 29). Talking to reporters after the meeting, Khokon said the commission has failed to create a proper atmosphere for holding a fair election in the three cities. "We've placed our party's various demands to the Commission to ensure a fair balloting tomorrow (July 30)," he said.<sup>87</sup>

- **Jamaat yet to side with BNP in Rajshahi**

Jammat-e-Islami, a member of BNP-led 20-party alliance, has a vote bank in Rajshahi, but the party is yet to join forces with the BNP in order to help the mayoral candidate win the Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) election. Local BNP leaders said they held two meetings with the Jamaat leaders to involve them in the campaigning, but got no response.<sup>88</sup>

- **Rigging in city polls justifies caretaker govt demand: BNP**

The opposition BNP has worked out 'strategies' to apply in Monday's (July 30) elections to three city corporations to ensure presence of its polling agents and encourage party supporters to cast their votes 'braving all odds'. The BNP leaders, reports UNB, came up with the strategies following civic polls in Khulna and Gazipur where, the party allegedly, it lost to massive rigging. Some party senior leaders said they will in no way engage themselves in any violence in the polls as they have worked out plans to face any unwanted situation tactfully instead of applying force.<sup>89</sup>

## नेपाल

### नेपाल

2018 ,जुलाई 30

डॉ गोविंदा के सी की मांगों पर नेताओं में मतभेद:

डॉ गोविंदा के सी दल सत्ताधारी मुख्य और है रहे कर हड़ताल भूख लिए के मांगों अपनी से दिन 24 सी के डॉ पर सरकार .है विचार अलग अलग लेकर इसको में नेताओं के पार्टी कम्युनिस्ट नेपाल प्रचंड और ओली लिए इसके और है रहा आ दबाव काफी भी से तरफ की जनता लेकर को मांगों की

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<sup>87</sup> "BNP lodges complaints with EC," *Prothom Alo*, July 29, 2018,

<http://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/news/180672/BNP-lodges-complaints-with-EC>, accessed on July 29, 2018.

<sup>88</sup> "Jamaat yet to side with BNP in Rajshahi," *Dhaka Tribune*, July 29, 2018,

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/election/2018/07/29/jamaat-yet-to-side-with-bnp-in-raishahi>,

accessed on July 29, 2018.

<sup>89</sup> "Rigging in city polls justifies caretaker govt demand: BNP," *Prothom Alo*, July 30, 2018,

<http://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/news/180663/Rigging-in-city-polls-justifies-caretaker-govt>, accessed on

July 30, 2018.

रही हो भी नाआलोच कीहै खुद सी के डॉ कि कहा ने ओली प्रधानमन्त्री में जवाब इसके .  
.चाहिए आना आगे लिए के करने बात से सरकार उन्हें .रहे कर उल्लंघन का मानवाधिकारों  
सी के डॉ तो यह कि कहा उन्होंने में बाद और रहे मौन तक समय काफी पर इस दहाल पुष्पकमल  
ने दल विपक्षी मुख्य पर इस .है आदत कीपाली कांग्रेस ने सरकार की काफी आलोचना की.<sup>90</sup>

भारत का फील्ड्स ऑफिस :होगा बंद से अगस्त 1

काठमांडू स्थित भारतीय दूतावास ने बताया कि नेपाल सरकार के आग्रह के बाद भारत सरकार ने  
यह निर्णय लिया है कि बिराटनगर स्थित फील्ड ऑफिस को बंद कर उसे काठमांडू ही लाया  
जायेगा .इसे आगामी कोशी में 2008 को ऑफिस फील्ड इस .है प्रस्ताव का करने बंद को अगस्त 1  
.था गया किया शुरू बाद के आपदा बाढ़<sup>91</sup>

डॉ की सी ने भूख हड़ताल बंद की:

डॉ की सी गोविन्द ने कर बंद हड़ताल भूख बाद के समझौते सूत्री नौ साथ के सरकार दिन वें 27  
काठमांडू राद्वा सरकार .दीमें नए मेडिकल कॉलेज खोलने पर राजी होने के बाद ही डॉ के सी  
आश्वस्त हुए का समझौते इस हम कि कहा ने नेबांग सुभाष नेता के दल साम्यवादी नेपाल .  
.करवाएंगे द्वारा संसद लागुकरण<sup>92</sup>

औपचारिक रूप में नेकपा प्रवेश करने की तैयारी में त्रिपाठी समूह:

राजपा त्यागकर स्वतन्त्र समूह से राजनीति में सक्रिय हृदयेश त्रिपाठी समूह नेपाल कम्युनिष्ट  
पार्टी औपचारिक में (नेकपा)क प्रवेश करने की तैयारी में है. इसके लिए नेकपा ने अपनी ओर से  
प्रक्रिया भी शुरू किया है. समाचार स्रोत के अनुसार प्रधानमन्त्री निवास बालुवाटार में शनिबार  
सम्पन्न सचिवायल बैठक में इसके संबंध में औपचारिक विचार-विमर्श हो गई थी. नेकपा स्रोत  
का मानना है कि त्रिपाठी समूह को नेकपा में एकीकरण करने के लिए विचार-विमर्श जारी है,  
त्रिपाठी समूह से बातचीत भी हो रहा है. स्मरणीय है, स्वतन्त्र राजनीतिक समूह बना कर भी  
त्रिपाठी समूह के कुछ नेताओं ने तत्कालीन नेकपा एमाले की चुनाव चिन्ह 'सूर्य' लेकर चुनाव में  
सहभागी हुए थे. त्रिपाठी और ब्रजेश कुमार गुप्ता उसी समूह से अभी सांसद हैं. एमाले और  
माओवादी केन्द्र बीच पार्टी एकता होने के बाद त्रिपाठी और गुप्ता कानूनतः नेकपा के ही सांसद हैं.

<sup>90</sup> "Top Leaders Indifferent to activist's demands", The Kathmandu Post, 24 July 2018,  
<https://epaper-beta.ekantipur.com/kathmandupost/2018-07-24>

<sup>91</sup> "India field office closes on August 1", The Kathmandu Post, 25 July 2018,  
<https://epaper-beta.ekantipur.com/kathmandupost/2018-07-25>

<sup>92</sup> Tika R pradhan, "Dr KC ends fast", The Kathmandu Post, 27 July 2018,  
<https://epaper-beta.ekantipur.com/kathmandupost/2018-07-27>

लेकिन वे लोग अपने को स्वतन्त्र सांसद कहते हैं. इसीलिए राजनीतिक रूप से एक होने के लिए उन लोगों को औपचारिक रूप में नेकपा प्रवेश कराने प्रक्रिया शुरू की गई है.<sup>93</sup>

## Pakistan

- **Elections in Pakistan**

The federal elections in Pakistan took place on July 25<sup>th</sup> for the National Assembly and four provinces. Results were declared in phases. Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) has emerged as the largest political party in the country, winning 115 of the 270 National Assembly seats on which the elections were held. The party, however, is short of the 137 needed for simple majority. The PML-N won 64 seats, while the PPP is in third place with 43 seats to its name. PML-N won 129 of the 295 provincial assembly seats in Punjab. PTI is close behind with 123 seats and, with the help of independents (28), can bring its own chief minister. The PPP is in majority in Sindh Assembly by winning 76 seats in the house of 130. PTI has won in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where it has won 66 seats of a total of 97 seats. The BAP has emerged as the largest party in Balochistan with 15 provincial assembly seats, with MMA in the second place with nine. Government formation in Balochistan remains uncertain and likely one will witness the formation of a coalition government.<sup>94</sup> PML-N, PPP, MMA and JUI(F) have decided to reject the election results. PML-N and PPP have come together to oppose PTI in the parliament on a “a coordinated joint opposition strategy”, whereas MMA and JUI(F) have decided to boycott the parliament.<sup>95</sup> The Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), led by PM-in-waiting Imran Khan, has secured around four million more votes than its arch-rival Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in the elections to the National Assembly.<sup>96</sup> Formal talks between the leadership of PTI and PML-Q over cooperation in the formation of governments in the centre and Punjab started on July 30, 2018.<sup>97</sup>

- **Pakistan and Afghanistan**

According to Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's (PTI) central media cell, the Afghan president on July 29<sup>th</sup> telephoned Imran Khan and congratulated him over the

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<sup>93</sup> " औपचारिक रूप में नेकपा प्रवेश करने की तैयारी में त्रिपाठी समूह", हिमालिनी ,30 जुलाई 2018,

<http://www.himalini.com/>

<sup>94</sup> “PTI largest party with 115 NA seats as ECP releases final tally two days after polls”, *Dawn*, July 28, 2018,

<https://www.thedailystar.net/pakistan-elections-2018/pakistan-polls-pti-wins-115-na-seats-ecp-releases-final-tally-1612483?browserpush=true> as accessed on July 30, 2018

<sup>95</sup> Amir Wasim, “PPP, PML-N join hands to give Imran tough time”, *Dawn*, July 30, 2018,

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1423776/ppp-pml-n-join-hands-to-give-imran-tough-time> as accessed on July 30, 2018

<sup>96</sup> Iftikhar A. Khan, “PTI secures lead of four million votes over PML-N”, *Dawn* July 29, 2018,

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1423605> as accessed on July 30, 2018

<sup>97</sup> Waseem Ashraf Butt “PTI, PML-Q formal talks begin today”, *Dawn*, July 30, 2018,

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1423733/pti-pml-q-formal-talks-begin-today> as accessed on July 30, 2018

PTI's success in general elections held on July 25 in the country. He also invited Imran Khan to Kabul as a goodwill gesture and the invitation was accepted.<sup>98</sup>

## West Asia

### Iraq and GCC

- **Sistani: Iraq urgently needs government to 'reduce suffering, misery'**<sup>99</sup>

Iraq must urgently form a new government and address the demands of citizens protesting corruption and a lack of jobs and basic services, Iraq's top Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani said Friday (29 July). "The current government must work hard urgently to implement citizens' demands to reduce their suffering and misery," Sistani said in his Friday sermon, via his representative, in the holy city of Karbala. "He (the new prime minister) must launch a relentless war against the corrupted and those who protect them," he added, according to Reuters.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has promised to address the "just demands" of protesters by creating jobs and speeding up infrastructure projects.

The intervention from Sistani, whose words are strictly followed by many Shiite followers and politicians, will pile yet more pressure on the embattled prime minister. Abadi, whose party came third in Iraq's May 12 parliamentary election, is not guaranteed to stay on as prime minister.

The creation of a new government hinges to a great extent on who the Kurdish parties choose to work with. Sadr, whose Sairoon alliance got the highest number of seats, has called for government formation talks to be postponed until the demands of protesters are met.

- **Iraq says Saudis to sell it power at a fraction of Iran's Price**<sup>100</sup>

Saudi Arabia agreed to build a solar power plant and sell the electricity to Iraq at a steep discount to supplies the war-torn country previously bought from the kingdom's regional arch-rival Iran. The deal, which hasn't been approved yet by Iraqi authorities, includes building a 3,000-megawatt plant in Saudi Arabia within a year of the signing of the agreement, Iraq's Ministry of Electricity spokesman Mussab Serri said by phone. Iraq will buy the electricity for \$21 per megawatt-hour, or a quarter of what it paid Iran for the imports, Serri said.

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<sup>98</sup> Syed Irfan Raza, "Imran accepts Ghani's invitation to visit Kabul", *Dawn*, July 30, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1423774/imran-accepts-ghanis-invitation-to-visit-kabul> as accessed on July 30, 2018

<sup>99</sup> <http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/270720181>

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-07-29/iraq-says-saudis-to-sell-it-power-at-a-fraction-of-iran-s-price>

Protests have broken out in Iraq this month, spurred by anger over unemployment and inadequate public services including power and water shortages ever since the U.S.-led invasion of 2003. Iraq halted purchases of electricity from Iran in July, exacerbating a gap between the supply of electricity and consumption that has resulted in rolling power cuts.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi suspended Electricity Minister Qassim Fahdawi on Sunday while the government investigates why the power service is poor.

- **Qatar’s Emir in London for talks with British Prime Minister<sup>101</sup>**

Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani met British Prime Minister Theresa May to discuss defence and security matters, as well as cooperation during the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. According to a Downing Street spokesperson: They agreed that the trade and investment relationship between the UK and Qatar was already strong, welcoming the fact that half of Qatar’s 2017 £5 billion investment commitment had already been allocated to projects in the UK.” “They agreed the bilateral defence and security relationship was also strong and growing, noting the recent £6 billion Typhoon deal. They discussed how the UK could continue to support Qatar to deliver a safe and successful World Cup 2022, with the Prime Minister highlighting our particular expertise in this area. They agreed to intensify joint counter-terrorism work, recognising the importance of tackling the root causes of terrorism including the ideology that underpins it.”

Qatar’s Emir is eager to strengthen relations with Western allies amid a blockade on his country by neighbouring Arab states.

## Turkey

- **Turkey parliament approves new anti-terror law**

Turkey’s parliament has ratified a tough anti-terrorism bill proposed by the ruling party, six days after the two-year-long state of emergency ended. The new anti-terror law, which was passed on Wednesday, strengthens the authorities’ powers in detaining suspects and imposing public order. The new legislation allows authorities to control who can enter and exit an area for 15 days for reasons of security, while suspects can be held without charge for 48 hours or up to four days if there are multiple offences.<sup>102</sup>

- **Russia-Turkey ties face 'moment of truth' over Syria's Idlib**

On July 26, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa.

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<sup>101</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-meeting-with-emir-of-qatar-24-july-2018>

<sup>102</sup> “**Turkey parliament approves new anti-terror law**”, Aljazeera, 25 July 2018. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/07/turkey-parliament-approves-anti-terror-law-180725152308059.html>



As was anticipated ahead of the talks, their agenda was dominated by Syria and bilateral Russia-Turkish relations. The need for the meeting was motivated by serious concerns on part of the Turkish leadership over the situation around Idlib as well as the Kurdish issue in Syria. Ahead of the meeting, the two presidents had a few phone conversations where these issues were thoroughly discussed.<sup>103</sup>

- **Russia, Iran, Turkey Set To Meet In Sochi For Syria Discussions**

Russia, Iran, and Turkey, co-sponsors of Syrian peace talks held periodically in Kazakhstan, will meet on July 30-31 in the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi to discuss issues related to the seven-year-long civil war. The Russian Foreign Ministry on July 29 said representatives will discuss issues regarding the formation of a Syrian constitutional committee, the de-escalation zones established in Syria, and humanitarian issues.<sup>104</sup>

- **Turkey to hold Syria summit with Germany, France, Russia**

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on Sunday announced another international summit on Syria with participation from his counterparts in Germany, France and Russia, German broadcaster Deutsche Welle reported. The four-way meeting, whose location has yet to be confirmed, is expected to take place on September 7, Deutsche Welle said with Erdoğan stating that the regional topics will also be discussed at the gathering.<sup>105</sup>

## Saudi Arabia

- **Saudi Arabia presents first VNR on sustainable development at UN headquarters**

Saudi Arabia presented its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) during a High Level Political Forum at UN headquarters in New York last week. The Kingdom participated in the forum with an official delegation from governmental, private and non-governmental organizations, headed by Faisal bin Fadel Al-Ibrahim, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Economy and Planning. During his presentation at the forum, and with the participation of Mr. Yousif bin Abdullah Al-Bunyan, CEO of Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) and Her Royal Highness Princess Al-Bandari Bint Abdulrahman Al-Faisal, he explained that

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<sup>103</sup>“ Russia-Turkey ties face 'moment of truth' over Syria's Idlib”, Al-Monitor, 27 July 2018. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/07/russia-turkey-syria-idlib.html>

<sup>104</sup> “Russia, Iran, Turkey Set To Meet In Sochi For Syria Discussions”, RadioFreeEuropeRadioLiberty, 29 July 2018. <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-iran-turkey-meet-in-sochi-for-syria-talks/29397053.html>

<sup>105</sup> “Turkey to hold Syria summit with Germany, France, Russia”, Ahval, 29 July 2018. <https://ahvalnews.com/syria/turkey-hold-syria-summit-germany-france-russia>

Saudi Arabia's march toward sustainable development is ongoing progress is being made.<sup>106</sup>

- **Eritrean president in Saudi Arabia, holds bilateral talks with King Salman**

Eritrean president Isaias Afwerki on July 23 arrived in Jeddah for an official visit having departed the capital Asmara earlier that morning. Information minister Yemane Meskel wrote on Twitter that the president was in Saudi on the invitation of King Salman. Both sides will hold consultations on bilateral and regional issues of cooperation & coordination.<sup>107</sup>

- **Saudi Arabia felicitates Imran Khan on election win**

Saudi Arabia King Shah Sulman on 27 July sent a congratulatory message to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on winning the historic July 25 polls. The message was delivered by Saudi envoy in Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, who called on prime minister-in waiting Imran Khan at his Bani Gala residence in Islamabad. Imran said Pakistan attached great importance to its ties with Saudi Arabia and his PTI party would work to further strengthen the relationship between the two countries.<sup>108</sup>

- **Yemen war escalates as Houthis threaten UAE, Saudi Arabia**

The Iranian-backed Houthi rebels are escalating their threats against Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The rebels do not appear intimidated by the Saudi coalition. The Yemeni war is increasingly entangled in the American conflict with Iran, which doesn't augur well for the Yemenis. The Zaydi Shiite Houthis attacked Saudi vessels in the Red Sea on July 25. The Houthis claimed that they struck a Saudi warship; the Saudis say it was two oil tankers and announced that they were temporarily halting oil shipments via the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. Their announcement was not followed by others. Oil prices did not jump.<sup>109</sup>

- **Saudi Arabia concerned at UN inaction in Yemen**

Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the UN Abdullah Al-Mouallimi expressed concern over the UN Security Council's inaction in Yemen, which he said helped Iran arm the Houthi militias.

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<sup>106</sup>“Saudi Arabia presents first VNR on sustainable development at UN headquarters”, Arab News, 22 July 2018. <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1343461/saudi-arabia>

<sup>107</sup> “Eritrean president in Saudi Arabia, holds bilateral talks with King Salman”, Africa News, 23 July 2018. <http://www.africanews.com/2018/07/23/eritrean-president-heads-to-saudi-arabia-on-invitation-of-king-salman/>

<sup>108</sup> “Saudi Arabia felicitates Imran Khan on election win”, Dunya News, 28 July 2018. <https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/449905-Saudi-Arabia-king-Shah-Salman-congratulates-Imran-Khan-election-win>

<sup>109</sup> “Yemen war escalates as Houthis threaten UAE, Saudi Arabia”, Al Monitor, 29 July 2018. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/07/yemen-war-houthis-saudi-arabia-escalates.html#ixzz5Mi1xsgzO>

He condemned the Houthis' ongoing attacks against international navigation trade routes, the latest of which was the targeting of two Saudi oil tankers in the Bab Al-Mandeb Strait in the Red Sea. Mouallimi said it was unfortunate that the Security Council was not confronting the blatant violations of its resolutions.<sup>110</sup>

## Israel

- **Israel and Syria**

Israel shot down a Syrian fighter jet that penetrated Israeli airspace on July 24<sup>th</sup>. The Israeli Army stated that the Russian-made Sukhoi plane was under surveillance when it flew some 2 kilometers (1.25 miles) into Israeli airspace.<sup>111</sup> Two surface-to-air missiles were fired at the Sukhoi fighter jet, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) tweeted.<sup>112</sup>

- **Israel and the Gaza Protests**

Two Palestinians were shot dead by IDF fire on July 27<sup>th</sup> during violent demonstrations along the Gaza border fence, including a 12-year-old boy, while a third demonstrator died July 28<sup>th</sup> from his wounds from a shooting on the day before. According to the IDF, some 7,000 Palestinians took part in fresh protests on July 27<sup>th</sup> in several locations along the Gaza border.<sup>113</sup> It can be noted here that one Israeli civilian was stabbed to death on July 27<sup>th</sup> by a Palestinian. The Palestinian before being shot down also injured two civilians

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<sup>110</sup> “Saudi Arabia concerned at UN inaction in Yemen”, Saudi Gazette, 30 July 2018. <http://saudigazette.com.sa/article/539994/SAUDI-ARABIA/Saudi-Arabia-concerned-at-UN-inaction-in-Yemen>

<sup>111</sup> Yaniv Kubovich, Noa Landau and Jack Khoury, “Israel Shoots Down Syrian Fighter Jet Penetrating Israeli Airspace”, *Haaretz*, July 25, 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/israel-shoots-down-syrian-fighter-jet-penetrating-israeli-airspace-1.6311928> as accessed on July 30, 2018

<sup>112</sup> “Israel 'shoots down Syrian fighter over Golan Heights’”, *BBC*, July 24, 2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-44940599> as accessed on July 30, 2018

<sup>113</sup> Anna Ahronheim, “Three Palestinians killed as 7,000 riot along Gaza border”, *The Jerusalem Post*, July 27, 2018, <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Two-Palestinians-killed-as-7000-riot-along-Gaza-border-563608> as accessed on July 30, 2018

## Terrorism and Counter Terrorism

### Pakistan

S.No.	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	July 25	Balochistan	At least 31 people were killed and more than 30 others were injured in a suicide blast outside a polling station in Eastern Bypass area of provincial capital Quetta. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack. <sup>114</sup>	31	30

### Afghanistan

S.No.	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	July 23	Zabul	At least 10 security force personnel were killed and 12 others were injured in a clash with Taliban in Atghar district. The clashes started after the Taliban attacked the center of Atgar district, said provincial council head Atta Jan Haqbayan. <sup>115</sup>	10	12
2	July 25/July 29	Qatar	The US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Alice Wells met with members of the Taliban's political commission in Doha to discuss ways to lay the groundwork for peace talks. <sup>116</sup>  Confirming the direct meeting between the two sides, Mutasim Agha Jan, a former Taliban 'Finance	Talks held between the US and Taliban in Qatar	

<sup>114</sup> Syed Ali Shah, 31 killed in suicide blast outside Quetta polling station, *Dawn*, July 25, 2018,

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1422529/31-killed-in-suicide-blast-outside-quetta-polling-station>, accessed on July 30, 2018

<sup>115</sup> Ten Security Forces Members Killed in Zabul Clashes, *Tolo News*, July 24, 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/ten-security-forces-members-killed-zabul-clashes>, accessed on July 30, 2018

<sup>116</sup> US Envoy Meets Taliban Officials In Doha, *Tolo News*, July 26, 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/us-envoy-meets-taliban-officials-doha>, accessed on July 30, 2018

			Minister', who is currently living in Turkey, said, "Taliban's political representatives and American officials met in Qatar. No other side was part of the negotiations." He added that the talks on ending the 17-year conflict would continue at a higher level. "The Taliban want to end the invasion," he asserted. <sup>117</sup>		
3	July 26	Kabul	In a letter to US Congress, John F. Sopko, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) said that a staggering "USD 15.5 billion has been wasted in the country over the past 11 years." However, the watchdog claimed that this was its first estimate and that the figure is probably "only a portion". Sopko said that they had calculated the total amount of waste, fraud and abuse between 2008 and December 2017. <sup>118</sup>	SIGAR statement	
4	July 28	Nangarhar	At least 16 Daesh fighters were killed and five other suspects were arrested during Afghan forces' operations in Deh Bala, Achin, Nazian and Chaparhar districts.  According to the Ministry of Defense, the Afghan forces conducted 12 offensive operations in provinces, including Nangarhar, Kunar, Kapisa, Ghazni, Paktia, Paktika, Uruzgan, Ghor, Faryab, Balkh, Kunduz and Helmand provinces.	16	0

<sup>117</sup> Direct Talks with US Will Continue: Ex- Taliban Minister, *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, July 29, 2018, [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=21477](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21477), accessed on July 30, 2018

<sup>118</sup> Over \$15 Billion 'Wasted' In Afghanistan In Past 11 Years, *Tolo News*, July 26, 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/over-15-billion-%E2%80%98wasted%E2%80%99-afghanistan-past-11-years>, accessed on July 30, 2018

## Iraq

S.No.	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	July 27	Mosul	<p>German security sources confirmed that an IS leader, Reda Seyam <i>alias</i> Zul Qarnain, was killed in 2017 during operations to drive the militant group out of the city of Mosul. The confirmation about his death comes after a year of conflicting reports of his whereabouts.</p> <p>Seyam was a German citizen of Egyptian origin joined ISIS in Syria in 2012 and became the militant group's 'Education Minister'. He was praised because of his ability to radicalize the education system in Syria and Iraq for IS.<sup>119</sup></p>	1	0
2	July 28	Kirkuk	<p>The Iraqi Federal Police killed two IS militants during confrontations. "Federal Police managed to kill two Islamic State members after besieging them during confrontations that occurred following operation in Shalaka and al-Deb villages in Riyadh town in Kirkuk," Brigadier General Yahia Rasool, the spokesman for the Security Media Center.<sup>120</sup></p>	2	0
3	July 29	Salahuddin	<p>Iraqi troops have killed four IS terrorists, including three suicide bombers, during a security campaign in Samarra city. Spokesman for the Security Media Center Brigadier General Yahia Rasool said, "Troops from the Samarra Operations Command carried out a preemptive</p>	4	0

<sup>119</sup> German Islamic State 'education minister' confirmed dead, *The New Arab*, July 28, 2018, <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/7/28/german-islamic-state-education-minister-confirmed-dead>, accessed on July 30, 2018

<sup>120</sup> Nehal Mostafa, Two Islamic State members killed in confrontations against police, southwest of Kirkuk, *Iraqi News*, July 28, 2018, <https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/two-islamic-state-members-killed-in-confrontations-against-police-southwest-of-kirkuk/>, accessed on July 30, 2018

			operation in Samarra city, targeting a hotbed of the Islamic State group. <sup>121</sup>		
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## Syria

S.No.	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	July 25	Suwayda	<p>At least 166 people were killed in suicide bombing and attacks carried out by ISIS militants in As-Suwayda city.<sup>122</sup></p> <p>Following the attack, at least 14 Druze women were abducted by ISIS militants, who have threatened to harm the women if the Syrian government does not halt its offensive against the rebel-held pocket in the Yarmouk Valley near Jordan and the Golan Heights.<sup>123</sup></p>	96	176
2	July 27	Damascus	<p>During the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) session UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, said that the UN documented over 1200 violation cases against children in Syria, pointing out that the violations included the killing and mutilation of more than 600 children, as well as recruiting over 180 others by the fighting parties in Syria.</p> <p>Meanwhile, human rights organizations estimated that violations against children in Syria by</p>	Violations against children in Syria	

<sup>121</sup> Mohammed Ebraheem, Four Islamic State militants, including suicide bombers, killed in Samarra, *Iraqi News*, July 29, 2018, <https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/four-islamic-state-militants-including-suicide-bombers-killed-in-samarra/>, accessed on July 30, 2018

<sup>122</sup> Kareem Khadder & Sarah el Sirgany, ISIS says it's behind the attacks in Syria that killed 166, *CNN*, July 25, 2018, <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/07/25/middleeast/syria-bombing-intl/index.html>, accessed on July 30, 2018

<sup>123</sup> Seth J. Frantzman, 14 Druze Women Kidnapped In Latest Isis Atrocity In Syria, *Jerusalem Post*, July 25, 2018, <https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/14-Druze-women-kidnapped-in-latest-ISIS-atrocity-in-Syria-563711>, accessed on July 30, 2018

			greater numbers, where the Syrian Network for Human Rights documented the killing of more than 27,000 children in Syria since 2011. <sup>124</sup>	
3	July 28	Damascus	<p>The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said that they have agreed to work with the Syrian government towards a “democratic, decentralised Syria”, in an attempt to cement their autonomy in the war-ravaged country.</p> <p>The SDF's political wing, the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC), issued a short statement saying they would form committees to develop negotiations and “chart a roadmap to a democratic, decentralised Syria.”<sup>125</sup></p>	US-backed Kurds agree for a Syrian roadmap with Assad

### International Economic Issues

- **NDB to finance projects for \$1bn**

The New Development Bank (NDB), formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank, intends to finance South African infrastructure projects for \$1 billion (R13.43bn) this year, according to NDB President K.V. Kamath. He said the multilateral development bank, which was established in 2014, had so far this year extended lending of approximately \$500 million to South Africa, versus total loans of approximately \$5.1 billion. “South Africa will clearly be a focal area for us. We recognise that there is more that we can do in South Africa,” he said. The African Regional Centre (ARC), which opened its doors in Johannesburg last year, is expected to fast-track project identification, preparation and implementation in South Africa. This could see South Africa catch up with fellow BRICS members in terms of its share of financed projects. He said the bank was considering two “fairly large” projects to finance in South Africa this year in addition to the Transnet loan of \$200 million to rehabilitate container terminals in Durban. The two projects

<sup>124</sup> Thousands of children killed, wounded in Syrian conflict since 2013, *Iraqi News*, July 28, 2018, <https://www.iraqinews.com/arab-world-news/thousands-children-killed-wounded-syria-since-2013/>, accessed on July 30, 2018

<sup>125</sup> US-backed Syrian Kurds agree to 'roadmap' with Assad government, *Al Jazeera*, July 28, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/07/backed-syrian-kurds-agree-roadmap-assad-government-180728082610203.html>, accessed on July 30, 2018



were worth a total of approximately \$500 million. He, however, declined to give further details of the mooted loans.<sup>126</sup>

- **US-EU trade agreement lacks specifics and fails to eliminate issues with China**

During a meeting between the US President Donald Trump and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in the Oval Office of the White House on July 25, 2018, both leaders promised to work towards zero tariffs on non-auto industrial goods; to reduce barriers and increase trade in services, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, medical products and soybeans. They also agreed to reform the WTO and that the European Union will buy more liquefied natural gas from the United States. Most importantly, they agreed to not impose new tariffs on one another while they work together on these issues. Trump and Juncker also vowed “to resolve the steel and aluminium tariff issues and retaliatory tariffs” but without adding any detail on how that's going to take place. Noteworthy, the White House shook the EU by imposing steel and aluminium tariffs at the start of June and by threatening new duties on its car industry — a key engine for the European economy. The EU imposed duties on \$3.3 billion worth of American goods last month in response to the metal tariffs Trump abruptly imposed. According to Goldman Sachs, the Trump administration might also use the agreement with Europe “to win concessions from other trading partners, like China.” China has put forward retaliatory tariffs against the U.S. worth \$34 billion after the White House advanced with the same amount of duties on its imports earlier in July. China raised duties on American goods such as pork, electric vehicles and soybeans.<sup>127</sup>

- **BRICS Summit 2018: Johannesburg Declaration adopted**

The heads of state and government of all five BRICS nations including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa held the 10<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit from July 25-27, 2018 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The theme of the Summit was “*BRICS in Africa: Collaboration for inclusive growth and shared prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution*”. The leaders reaffirmed their commitment in strengthening multilateralism, reforming global governance and addressing common challenges; strengthening and consolidating BRICS cooperation in international peace and security; urged for the establishment of the BRICS Partnership for Global Economic Recovery, Reform Of Financial and Economic Global Governance Institutions, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution; and people-to-people cooperation.<sup>128</sup> The international community highly regarded the outcomes of the

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<sup>126</sup> “NDB to finance projects for \$1bn”, July 23, 2018, <https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/brics/ndb-to-finance-projects-for-1bn-16188319> (accessed on July 24, 2018)

<sup>127</sup> Silvia Amaro, “US-EU trade agreement lacks specifics and fails to eliminate issues with China” CNBC News, July 26, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/07/26/us-eu-trade-agreement-lacks-detail-and-fails-to-end-issues-with-china.html> (accessed on July 26, 2018)

<sup>128</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, “10th BRICS Summit Johannesburg Declaration”, July 26, 2018, <http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/30190/10th+BRICS+Summit+Johannesburg+Declaration> (accessed on July 27, 2018)

summit, saying that this summit marks that the BRICS countries are taking new steps in strengthening innovation and industrialization, sending a clear message for defending multilateralism and opposing trade protectionism, and it will further BRICS cooperation and play a key and positive role in boosting the world economic growth and improving global governance.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The New Times, 27 July 2018,

[https://allafrica.com/stories/201807270523.html?utm\\_campaign=allafrica%3Aeditor&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_content=promote%3Aaans%3Aabmrjk](https://allafrica.com/stories/201807270523.html?utm_campaign=allafrica%3Aeditor&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_content=promote%3Aaans%3Aabmrjk)

<sup>2</sup> This is Africa, 25 July 2018, <https://thisisafrica.me/uae-honours-ethiopian-and-eritrean-leaders/>

<sup>3</sup> This is Africa, 23 July 2018, <https://thisisafrica.me/ethiopia-and-eritrea-appoint-ambassadors/>

<sup>4</sup> Vanguard , 27 July 2018,

[https://allafrica.com/stories/201807270137.html?utm\\_campaign=allafrica%3Aeditor&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_content=promote%3Aaans%3Aablfpu](https://allafrica.com/stories/201807270137.html?utm_campaign=allafrica%3Aeditor&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_content=promote%3Aaans%3Aablfpu)

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<sup>129</sup> “Int’l community eyes outcomes of BRICS Summit in Johannesburg”, Xinhuanet, July 28, 2018, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/28/c\\_137354306.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/28/c_137354306.htm) (accessed on July 30, 2018)