

Weekly Media Updates **(03-09 July, 2017)**

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Africa

- **Focus on Africa taken forward at Hamburg G20 summit – Zuma¹**

President Jacob Zuma said on Sunday 9 July 2017 that the German presidency of the G20 this week managed to build on the achievements of the last summit in China which had emphasised sustainable development in Africa. In a statement issued by the presidency after his return from the summit in Hamburg, Zuma said the meeting had resulted in positive outcomes to a large degree as G20 leaders discussed and agreed on various developmental issues that would benefit the African continent.

He stated that “despite disagreements on certain issues, the summit managed to discuss and agree on various developmental matters that would be of advantage to South Africa and the African continent including the launch of the G20 Africa partnership. This programme was launched in recognition of the opportunities and challenges in the African continent as well as the goals of the United Nations Social Development Agenda 2030.”

He further said that “It was agreed that this initiative would be based on equal partnerships and will be in line with the African Union Agenda 2063. The partnership will further serve our national interest as it will generate a sustainable and inclusive economic growth and development, contribute to create decent employment and economic advancement for women and youth as well as alleviate poverty and inequality.” On climate change he noted that despite differences on climate and energy matters including the decision of the United States to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, the majority of leaders remained committed to the agreement as it represented best opportunities to address the existential threat posed by climate change.

- **Zambia’s President Lungu declares state of emergency²**

Zambian President Edgar Lungu has declared a state of emergency due to lawlessness caused by continued destruction to public properties. He said in a televised address on Wednesday 6 July, 2017, “this is not an easy decision to make, but in order to preserve peace, tranquility, safety of our citizens and national security, we had no choice but to take this decision given the events that have occurred in the recent past.” Lungu said he has issued a statutory instrument to invoke Article 31 of the constitution which gives him powers to declare a state of emergency. The matter will however be tabled in parliament for approval by lawmakers, he added. Lungu noted that the government has on several

¹ The Citizen , 9 July 2017, <http://citizen.co.za/news/news-national/1564275/focus-africa-taken-forward-hamburg-g20-summit-zuma/>

² Africa Updates, 7 July 2017, <http://africaupdates.info/zambias-president-lungu-declares-state-of-emergency/>

occasions advised citizens to desist from any irresponsible behavior and expressed sadness that this has fallen on deaf ears.

- **AfDB Wants Common Passport, Visa Openness in Africa³**

The African Development Bank (AfDB) group has called for a common passport and visa openness to spur intra - Africa trade and tourism, a new report - recently released by the bank states.

The Africa Tourism Monitor 2016 report says the creation of an African passport and an end to visa requirements for all African citizens, specifically visa openness will improve interconnectivity, boost economic growth and intra-Africa trade, and spur investment, bringing massive benefits for the travel and tourism industry.

The report also stresses why it is now more important than ever for African countries to craft economic and trade policies that will foster inclusive and green tourism growth, intra-Africa trade, and contribute to visa openness for a borderless and interconnected continent.

Visa openness also harmonises with AfDB's High 5s 'Integrate Africa' agenda, which seeks to make Africa more open, prosperous and interconnected. The African Union Commission (AUC) also champions for an African passport.

Dr Charles Leyeka Lufumpa, the director of the Statistics Department at the AfDB, in the report said the AUC's Agenda 2063 proposes the creation of an African passport and an end to visa requirements for all African citizens.

"Specifically, Visa openness is seen as having great potential to improve interconnectivity, boost economic growth and intra- Africa trade, and spur investment, bringing massive benefits for the travel and tourism industry in Africa," he said.

- **President's U.S.\$1 Million Donation Inspires African Leaders⁴**

Addressing journalists after the 29th Ordinary Session of the African Union Heads of State and Government Summit the Foreign Affairs Minister Simbarashe Mumbengegw of Zimbabwe said on Tuesday ,4 July 2017, that President Mugabe's \$1 million donation to the African Union Foundation has inspired his African colleagues, who have pledged to emulate his gesture.

³ The Monitor, 7 July 2017,

http://allafrica.com/stories/201707070050.html?utm_campaign=allafrica%3Aeditor&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_content=promote%3Aaans%3Acblp

⁴ The Herald, 5 July 2016, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201707050231.html>

On Monday, 3 July 2017, President Mugabe presented a \$1 million cheque in proceeds from the 2015 cattle donation he pledged towards capacitation of the African Union Foundation, as he pressed the call for the AU to be self-financing.

The pledge of 300 cattle by President Mugabe was expanded when he got overwhelming support from local farmers, who contributed more cattle that were then auctioned to fetch the \$1 million.

President Mugabe made the donation during the official opening of the 29th Ordinary Session of the African Union Heads of State and Government Summit which ended yesterday.

Minister Mumbengegwi further said President Mugabe was walking the talk on his calls for the self financing of the AU. He said "The President has for many years been pushing this idea that let us finance our own programmes and own projects, until now it is policy of the AU, which was adopted when he was chair of the Union in 2015 that within five years we must be able to finance hundred percent of our operations, 75 percent of our programmes and at least 25 percent of our peacekeeping budget".

- **Kagame Urges Africa to Stand Firm on AU Reforms⁵**

President Paul Kagame has called on African Union member states not to succumb to pressure by some external partners during the process of the Union's reforms. Kagame made the remarks while presenting a report on the implementation of the AU institutional reforms in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Kagame warned that some aspects of the reforms could cause discomfort among some external partners since it would challenge some of their interests as the continent becomes more independent.

He said "as evidence mounts that this reform is real and irreversible there have been expressions of polite surprise, bordering on discomfort, from external parties. Accommodating an articulate and effective African Union in the world order challenges entrenched interests and assumptions. Even those who wish us well may have reason to discourage a more independent and organised Africa. We should be prepared to react accordingly".

He said that the discomfort among external partners should always remind the AU member states on the reason for the reforms. Kagame's statement on the issue comes

⁵ The New Times , 4 July2016,
http://allafrica.com/stories/201707040047.html?utm_campaign=allafrica%3Aeditor&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_content=promote%3Aaans%3Aabmrjk

ahead of 5th EU-Africa Summit scheduled to take place in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, which among other aspects seeks to develop a partnership framework between the two parties.

He further noted "this should only serve to remind us of the reasons we felt the need to make these changes in the first place. It is important to prepare the framework for the upcoming partnership summit in Abidjan in advance, and within the spirit of our reform." The African Union last year adopted a self-financing mechanism whereby a 0.2 per cent levy on eligible imports would be imposed on products from outside Africa. External parties opposed to the move say that the move is not compatible with international trade principles. The parties claim that the levy decision is discriminatory.

Update on reforms

President Kagame, who is overseeing the reforms process, observed that there is notable progress as countries move to implement the reforms. He said the reforms will be done with flexibility to ensure that all member states' concerns were taken into consideration.

North Africa

Egypt

- **Full Circle: Hamas Goes to Cairo**⁶

In a surprise political development, the Hamas delegation from Gaza paid an official visit to Egypt and the delegation also met with former Fatah warlord Muhammad Dahlan. The Hamas delegation was led by Yahya Sinwar. Mr. Sinwar, a newly elected Gaza leader is known within the movement as a hardliner, and also for his conviction that Hamas should improve relations with Iran to balance its dependence on Qatar and Turkey. Like most of his peers, he is additionally anxious to normalize relations with Egypt, which since Sisi's 2013 coup has launched an unprecedented vilification campaign against Hamas and that has sealed the Gaza Strip's only border with the state of Israel.

Speaking to supporters in Gaza on Wednesday newly elected political bureau chief of the Hamas; Mr. Haniya reaffirmed the group's policy of not interfering in Egypt's internal affairs. He also said that Hamas will not allow the Gaza Strip to be used as a shelter or haven for anyone who intends to harm Egyptian national security. The group also stressed in a statement its respect and appreciation for Egypt's historical role in supporting the Palestinian cause.

The statement pointed to the last week's talks between Hamas and Egyptian officials in Cairo, which it says have led to some results that will help ease the situation in Gaza. The statement added that the talks also touched upon the resumption of Palestinian national

⁶ Ahram online English <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/273132/Egypt/Politics-/Hamas-leader-Haniya-hails-new-page-in-relations-wi.aspx>

reconciliation efforts. It is worth mentioning here that the relations between Egypt and the Palestinian Islamist group, which rules the Gaza Strip, were strained in the wake of the ouster of Egypt's Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in July 2013.

- **Fuel price hike in Egypt⁷**

In a much anticipated move, the government in Egypt has cut the subsidy on fuel increasing the price by almost half of their previous value. The move is expected to reduce the budget deficit by LE 35 billion in current fiscal year. According to an official release, the price of diesel, kitchen gas and gasoline has witnessed the hike by 55 %, 25 % and 43 % respectively. Meanwhile the price of LPG for household consumption has witnessed the hike of almost 100 %. According to the minister of petroleum, the saving on subsidy will be invested in future to upgrade the downstream infrastructure in order to improve the availability of high quality fuel to common people. This move on the part of government is being seen as government's vulnerability to the dictate of the IMF which has been providing loan of US \$ 12 billion in installment. The current hike has been condemned by many groups and social activists and it has particularly hit the household budget of the poor and lower and middle class families.

Central Asia

- **Pakistan Prime Minister Visits Tajikistan**

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif paid a two-day official visit to Tajikistan from 5 to 6 July 2017. He headed a delegation and held Summit talks with President Emomali Rahmon in Dushanbe. The two countries are commemorating the 25th year of establishment of diplomatic relations. During the talks, the two leaders discussed a range of bilateral, regional and international issues. The current situation in Afghanistan, fight against international terrorism and extremism, illegal drug trade and other forms of transnational organized crime, were also discussed.⁸ Pakistan has recently joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and it is the visit of Pakistan Prime Minister since becoming the full member of the Eurasian organization.

Tajikistan is a landlocked country and President Rahmon expressed interest in using the capabilities of sea ports and transit networks of Pakistan to expand trade at the regional level. In this context the visit assumed significance as the Tajikistan–Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement, which aims to enhance the provision of transportation services between the two countries, was signed by Tajikistan and Pakistan. The two leaders also signed a Joint Statement titled “Road towards strategic partnership for regional

⁷ Mada Masr <https://www.madamasr.com/en/2017/06/29/news/u/egypt-hikes-fuel-prices-by-up-to-100-to-save-le35-billion-in-budget/>

⁸ President of Tajikistan, “Summit talks between Tajikistan and Pakistan,” 5 July 2017, <http://www.president.tj/en/node/15714>

solidarity”. It seems that the treaty may lead to increased engagement between South Asia and Central Asia and facilitate regional economic integration.

Tajikistan seeks greater involvement of businesses from Pakistan to its free economic zones and implementation of various projects in industry, energy, transportation, tourism, education and healthcare fields. Pakistan and Tajikistan along with Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan are implementing CASA-1000 electricity transmission project. The project aims to supply surplus electricity generated in Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic to Afghanistan and Pakistan, especially during the summer time in South Asia. The visiting Prime Minister also attended a meeting in Dushanbe on the CASA-1000 project along with President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani and Prime Minister of Kyrgyz Republic Sooronbay Jeenbekov, and representatives of the international financial institutions.

Other documents signed during the visit include an MoU on trade cooperation between the governments of Tajikistan and Pakistan; MoU on cooperation between Tajik Agrarian University and Arid Agriculture University, Pakistan.

China

- **China, Pakistan vow to strengthen cooperation on science, technology**

China and Pakistan have agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation on science and technology under the Belt and Road Initiative. The agreement was made on July 8 during a meeting between Pakistani President Mamnoon Hussain and visiting Chinese Minister of Science and Technology, Wan Gang, who is in Islamabad for the 18th Session of the Pak-China Joint Committee on Science and Technology Cooperation. The Chinese minister said China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperative partners, and bilateral ties enjoy a smooth development with the steady construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, adding that cooperation on science and technology is an important content in the bilateral relations. Wan, also Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee, said the two sides have carried out a series of pragmatic cooperation such as joint laboratory construction and young scientists' exchanges.⁹

- **Current Stand-Off an Attempt by China to Change the Status Quo at Tri-Junction: Shivshankar Menon**

Shivshankar Menon, India's former National Security Advisor, asserted that the current stand-off at Doklam was serious due to China's attempt to change the

⁹ “China, Pakistan vow to strengthen cooperation on science, technology”, July 10, 2017, <https://eng.vidaiyilu.gov.cn/qwyw/rdxw/19048.htm> (accessed on July 10, 2017)

status quo at the tri-junction with Bhutan and its unwillingness to return to the status quo.¹⁰

- **Informal BRICS Leaders Meeting in Hamburg**

The leaders of the five BRICS countries held an informal meeting on the sidelines of G20 Summit in Hamburg, Germany. This was in run up to the forthcoming 9th BRICS Summit in September in Xiamen, China. President Xi of China said he looked forward to welcoming the BRICS leaders. In their interventions, the leaders discussed preparations and priorities for the forthcoming Xiamen BRICS Summit. Prime Minister Modi mentioned that BRICS has been a strong voice and needs to show leadership on terrorism and global economy. He stressed that G20 should collectively oppose terrorism financing, franchises, safe havens, support and sponsors. Referring to reforms in India, including the recent introduction of GST, PM stated that it was necessary to work together for sustained global economic recovery.¹¹

- **Egyptian Police Detain Uighurs and Deport Them to China¹²**

At least 12 Chinese nationals were deported and put on a flight to China late on July 6, and 22 more were detained for immediate deportation, three Egyptian aviation officials said. According to a Chinese student who said he was friends with some of those detained, all were Uighurs, members of an ethnic group that is mostly Sunni Muslim and lives mainly in the western Chinese region of Xinjiang. The student, Muhammed Emin Nurmuhammed, said that his friends had been studying at Al Azhar, a mosque and university in Cairo. Two of the aviation officials said that the Egyptian police had ordered them to deport at least 22 Chinese nationals on July 6, without providing an explanation. They were held at a police facility and were to be put on a flight that was scheduled to leave just before midnight.

¹⁰ Devirupa Mitra, “Current Stand-Off an Attempt by China to Change the Status Quo at Tri-Junction: Shivshankar Menon”, *The Wire*, July 9, 2017, <https://thewire.in/155766/current-stand-off-attempt-china-change-status-quo-tri-junction-shivshankar-menon/> (accessed on July 10, 2017)

¹¹ Government of India, Ministry of External affairs, “Informal BRICS Leaders Meeting in Hamburg”, *Press Release*, July 9, 2017, http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/28601/Informal_BRICS_Leaders_Meeting_in_Hamburg (accessed on July 7, 2017)

¹² Nour Youssef, “Egyptian Police detain Uighurs and deport them to China”, *New York Times*, July 6, 2017, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/06/world/asia/egypt-muslims-uighurs-deportations-xinjiang-china.html> (accessed 10 July).

- **China, US to join forces on economy**¹³

The latest meeting between President Xi Jinping and his US counterpart, Donald Trump, on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Hamburg, Germany, was productive and reassuring to the world as it confirmed ongoing discussions about an ambitious economic cooperation plan and a sequence of meetings involving senior military officers. The two presidents' second meeting this year took place amid widespread concern about tensions on the Korean Peninsula and a US warship's recent intrusion into Chinese waters in the South China Sea. Both leaders agreed to maintain close high-level contact and to reinforce strategic mutual trust, a news release from the Foreign Ministry said. The first round of a comprehensive economic dialogue was set for July 19, and Beijing and Washington will launch at an early date their first law enforcement and cyber security dialogue, as well as their first social and cultural dialogue.

- **Xi says China welcomes Hamburg to participate in B&R Initiative**¹⁴

During a meeting with Hamburg Mayor Olaf Scholz ahead of the G20 annual summit President Xi Jinping said on July 6, 2017, that China welcomes Hamburg to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative and stands ready to strengthen pragmatic cooperation with this major German port city to help boost the relations between the two countries. Xi said that Hamburg in history was one of the earliest European cities that started cooperation with China, and it is today an important bridgehead in China-Germany and China-Europe cooperation, which gathers most Chinese-funded businesses in Germany and even in Europe at large. Hamburg enjoys a unique geographical advantage in Asia-Europe connectivity and the Belt and Road Initiative as it is not only an important port along the China-Europe Maritime Silk Road but also an important terminal for China-Europe freight trains.

European Union

- **German Troops Withdrawal from Incirlik Base**

Germany has begun withdrawing troops from Incirlik base in Turkey. The decision to withdraw the troops taken after Turkey repeatedly refused German parliamentarians to visit the air base. Therefore, Germany has decided to withdraw the troops from Incirlik air base. Currently, Germany-Turkey relations are strained.¹⁵

¹³ An Baijie, "China, US to join forces on economy", *China Daily*, July 10, 2017, at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2017xivisitgermany/2017-07/10/content_30049278.htm (accessed 10 July).

¹⁴ Xinhua, "Xi says China welcomes Hamburg to participate in B&R initiative", *China Daily*, 7 July 2017, at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2017xivisitgermany/2017-07/07/content_30031670.htm (accessed 10 July).

¹⁵ Germany starts to withdraw troops from Turkish Incirlik base, DW, July 10, 2017, <http://www.dw.com/en/germany-starts-to-withdraw-troops-from-turkish-incirlik-base/a-39619732>

- **G20 Summit in Hamburg 2017**

The 12th G20 summit was held in Hamburg on 7-8 July 2017. A range of issues including international terrorism, climate change, global trade were discussed at the summit. G20 Leaders' Declaration - Shaping an interconnected world states about sharing the benefits of globalization, building resilience, improving livelihoods, women entrepreneurship and assuming responsibility.¹⁶

- **US President Trump's Visit to Poland**

The US President Donald Trump visited Poland on 6 July 2017. The visit was considered to be crucial for Poland. In Warsaw, President Trump said, "As the Polish experience reminds us, the defence of the West ultimately rests not only on means but also on the will of its people to prevail." He also called on Russia to stop 'its destabilising activities' in Ukraine and end the support for governments in Syria and Iran.¹⁷

East Asia /South-East Asia

Korean Peninsula and Japan

- **US-ROK Military Response to North Korean Missile Test**

As a response to North Korean ICBM test on July 4, the US and South Korean military jointly conducted missile drill on July 5. It was the first time that a missile drilled is conducted as a show of force in response to North Korean provocation. The missile drill was order by South Korean President Moon Jae-in in consultation with US President Donald Trump. According to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Hyunmoo-2A and the Army Tactical Missile System were fired during the missile drill.¹⁸ US also send two B-1B bombers from Guam to South Korea in a show of force that included South Korean and Japanese fighter jets.¹⁹

On July 8, the U.S. Pacific Air Forces said that B-1 Lancer bombers, which flew from Guam over the Korean Peninsula, became the second time in two days that U.S. Air Force

¹⁶ G20 Leaders' Declaration Shaping an interconnected world https://www.g20.org/Content/EN/_Anlagen/G20/G20-leaders-declaration.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1

¹⁷ Trump says Western civilisation at stake in Warsaw speech, BBC, 6 July 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40515329>

¹⁸ "Allies conduct armed protest", *The Korea Times*, July 5, 2017, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/07/205_232477.html (accessed on July 10, 2017)

¹⁹ "Bombers buzz Korean Peninsula as U.S. says it is 'ready to unleash full lethal capability of allied air forces'", *The Japan Times*, July 8, 2017, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/07/08/asia-pacific/bombers-buzz-korean-peninsula-u-s-says-ready-unleash-full-lethal-capability-allied-air-forces/#.WWMm0Ih96M8> (accessed on July 10, 2017)

bombers displayed the military might in East Asia, came in response to North Korea's increasing ballistic missile and nuclear threat. According to the officials, South Korean and Japanese warplanes, along with the U.S. F-16 fighters joined the U.S. bombers for parts of the mission on July 7, during which the bombers used inert weapons to practice attacks on a South Korea firing range. According to reports, the flight was the sixth such flight since April, to display American resolve in the face of North Korean missile tests.²⁰

- **North Korea Successfully tested an ICBM**

According to North Korean state media KCNA on July 4, 2017, North Korea successfully tested its first Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) Hwasong-14.²¹ According to South Korea media sources, the missile reached an altitude of 2802 kilometres and covered a distance of 933 kilometres before landing in the East Sea. According to expert analysis the missile is capable of reaching the US state Alaska. The timing of the missile test was also crucial. It was conducted on American Independence day, a day after President Moon returned to Seoul after his Summit meet with Trump and a day before the beginning of G20 Summit in Germany.²²

- **US-Korea-Japan Trilateral Agrees to build to Pressure on North Korea**

On July 7, 2017, at the sidelines of G20 Summit in Germany, the leaders of South Korea, Japan and United States agreed to work together in their response to North Korean provocation. In a joint statement issued at the outcome of the meeting, the three leaders condemned DPRK's July 4 ICBM test and called for the adoption of a new UNSC resolution with additional sanctions.²³ The Meeting was the first Trilateral Summit organised between the three countries since the election of President Trump and President Moon.

- **UNSC failed to Condemn North Korea Following Russia's Protest**

²⁰ "U.S. responds to North Korea's ICBM test, sends U.S. bombers flying over Korean Peninsula", *North Korea Times*, July 9, 2017.

<http://www.northkoreatimes.com/news/253894149/us-responds-to-north-koreas-icbm-test-sends-us-bombers-flying-over-korean-peninsula> (accessed on July 10, 2017).

²¹ "Report of DPRK Academy of Defence Science", *News Korea central Agency*, July 4, 2017,

<http://www.kcna.kp/kcna.user.article.retrieveNewsViewInfoList.kcmsf#this> (accessed on July 10, 2017)

²² "North Korea says 'SUCCESSFUL TEST' of intercontinental ballistic missile; capable of striking 'ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD'" *The Korea Times*, July 4, 2017,

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/07/103_232382.html (accessed on July 10, 2017)

²³ "Korea, US, Japan agree to raise pressure on NK", *The Korea Times*, July 7, 2017,

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2017/07/356_232604.html (Accessed on July 10, 2017)

A UNSC emergency meeting on July 6, called to discuss the North Korea's latest missile provocation, failed to condemn Pyongyang's action after Russia blocked the statement calling for "significant measures". Russia blocked the statement on the ground that it has not verified whether test was an ICBM. While the US, Japan and South Korea are pushing for additional sanction Russia and China is against such a move.²⁴

- **President Moon returns home after G-20 summit**

President Moon Jae-in returned home on July 10, 2017, after a five-day trip to Germany that largely sought to win international support for his efforts to bring North Korea back to the dialogue table and rid the communist state of its nuclear ambitions. The main purpose of his trip to the European nation was to take part in the Group of 20 summit held July 7-8, but his main objective clearly was to rally international support for fresh sanctions against the North for its latest missile provocation. Pyongyang test launched what it claims to be its first intercontinental ballistic missile on July 4, just one day before the new South Korean president embarked on his first overseas trip for a multilateral gathering. Later in a summit with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Moon stressed a need to increase sanctions and pressure on North Korea following its latest missile test. Under UN Security Council resolutions, the communist state is prohibited from developing its nuclear weapons or means to deliver them. The latest missile launch marked the sixth of its kind since Moon took office May 10.²⁵

(ASEAN, Malaysia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Phillipines)

- **Growing presence of the Islamic State in Indonesia and Malaysia**

Jakarta's Governor Djarot Saiful Hidayat, has urged the public to be more vigilant, after an Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) flag was found at the police headquarters in South Jakarta; placed on a fence surrounding the Kebayoran Lama Police headquarters on June 5, 2017.²⁶ In another incident on the growing clout of Islamic radicalisation in Indonesia, a video was realised by the ISIS. In the footage Malaysians and Indonesians were seen called on the authorities that they are no longer their citizens and have liberated

²⁴ "Trump weighs 'severe' response to Pyongyang ICBM test but Russia blocks further U.N. sanctions", *The Japan Times*, July 7, 2017, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/07/07/asia-pacific/politics-diplomacy-asia-pacific/trump-weighs-severe-response-pyongyang-icbm-test-russia-blocks-u-n-sanctions/#.WWMLN4h96M9> (Accessed on July 10, 2017)

²⁵ "President Moon returns home after G-20 summit", *The Korea Herald*, July 10, 2017. <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20170710000072> (accessed on July 10, 2017).

²⁶ "Jakarta Governor urges public to be vigilant after ISIS flag found at police headquarters", *The Straits Times*, July 5, 2017, <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/jakarta-governor-urges-public-to-be-vigilant-after-isis-flag-found-at-police> (accessed on July 5, 2017).

themselves and would come with a military force against the establishment.²⁷ A new federal Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) is being established at the Royal Malaysia Police to enhance the forces' ability to fight terrorism. The idea behind the move is to strengthen Malaysia's anti-terror defence and to enhance the police force's capabilities to handle growing global threats of terrorism. The establishment of this new department is timely, especially when terror threats are growing in the region. The intent of establishing the CTD is to train personnel to keep Malaysia from radical and extremist activities, including the war against the ISIS.²⁸

- **Indonesia and Malaysia Condemned North Korea on its ICBM Test**

The foreign ministries of Indonesia and Malaysia in their respective press statements shared their deep regret on North Korea's missile test, which was conducted on July 4, 2017. The missile test stands in contradiction of North Korea's obligation to comply with the UNSC resolutions. Indonesia urged North Korea to fully uphold its international obligations and called for all parties to restrain themselves so as to prevent the emergence of tension in the region.²⁹ Malaysian government while condemning North Korea's action stated that North Korea's persistent refusal to comply with its international obligation is a cause of great concern in the context of international peace and security. Further, Malaysia strongly urged North Korea to fulfil all its international obligations in the interest of the maintenance of international peace and security. Malaysia called for the immediate resumption of dialogue and negotiation between North Korea and the relevant parties, with a view to finding a peaceful resolution to the situation in the Korean Peninsula.³⁰

- **President Joko Widodo seek further Economic and Strategic Partnership with Turkey and Australia**

²⁷"ISIS videos declare war on Indonesia and Malaysia", *The Jakarta Post*, July 5, 2017, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/seasia/2017/07/05/isis-videos-declare-war-on-indonesia-and-malaysia.html> (accessed on July 6, 2017).

²⁸"Malaysia sets up new federal counter-terrorism department", *The Straits Times*, July 7, 2017, <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/malaysia-sets-up-new-federal-counter-terrorism-department> (accessed on July 7, 2017).

²⁹"Indonesia Deeply Regrets North Korea's Missile Test", July 5, 2017, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia*, <http://www.kemlu.go.id/en/berita/Pages/Indonesia-Deeply-Regrets-North-Korea%E2%80%99s-Missile-Test.aspx> (accessed on July 7, 2017).

³⁰"Ballistic Missile launched by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on July 4, 2017", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia*, July 5, 2017, http://www.kln.gov.my/web/guest/press-release/-/asset_publisher/FCk0/content/press-release:-ballistic-missile-launched-by-the-democratic-people%E2%80%99s-republic-of-korea-on-4-july-2017-siaran-akhbar:-pelancaran-peluru-berpandu-balistik-oleh-republik-rakyat-demokratik-korea-pada-4-julai-2017?redirect=%2Fweb%2Fguest%2Fpress-release (accessed on July 7, 2017).

Indonesian President Joko Widodo, who met with his Turkey counterpart, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on July 7, 2017, agreed towards restoring positive trends in trade and investments, through negotiations and launching the Indonesia-Turkey Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IT-CEPA). Apart from trade and investment, President Jokowi also conveyed to President Erdogan several other areas of potential cooperation such as defence, energy, and counter terrorism.³¹ Indonesia and Turkey agreed to increase cooperation on 'Foreign Terrorist Fighters'. Through this partnership, both countries will seek to advance partnership in the field of intelligence information by developing IT systems to ensure better cooperation in combating terrorism.³² Further, on the sideline of the G-20 Summit at Hamburg, President Jokowi met with the Prime Minister of Australia, Malcolm Turnbull. Both leaders agreed to complete the negotiations on the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA) by the end of 2017. The two leaders also sought a strategic partnership in order to address the issue of terrorism which according to the President is a global threat and hoped to launch the Strategic Comprehensive Partnership between Indonesia and Australia in 2018.³³

Myanmar

- **Hundreds of Myanmar workers returning to Thailand under MoU**

Hundreds of Myanmar workers are going back to Thailand daily to work under the Memorandum of Agreement (MoU) between the two countries, even as thousands more illegal Myanmar migrants continue to return home, said the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population. About 500 to 1000 workers are going to Thailand every day. According to the data of the welcoming camp for migrant workers at Kyaik Lone Gyi camp in Myawaddy, 11,893 Myanmar workers who do not have proper documents, returned to Myanmar from July 1- 6.³⁴

³¹ "RI-Turkey Agreed to Increase the Trade Cooperation", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Indonesia*, July 7, 2017, <http://www.kemlu.go.id/en/berita/Pages/RI-Turkey-Agreed-to-Upgrade-the-Trade-Cooperation.aspx> (accessed on July 10, 2017).

³² "RI-Turkey Increase Cooperation in Combating Terrorism", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Indonesia*, July 7, 2017, <http://www.kemlu.go.id/en/berita/Pages/RI-Turkey-Increase-Cooperation-in-Combating-Terrorism.aspx> (accessed on July 10, 2017).

³³ "Indonesia-Australia Agreed to Increase Cooperation in Trade and Counter-Terrorism", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Indonesia*, July 8, 2017, <http://www.kemlu.go.id/en/berita/Pages/Indonesia-Australia-Agreed-to-Increase-Cooperation-in-Trade-and-Counter-Terrorism.aspx> (accessed on July 10, 2017).

³⁴ "Hundreds of Myanmar workers returning to Thailand under MoU", *Myanmar Times*, July 7, 2017, <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/26706-hundreds-of-myanmar-workers-returning-to-thailand-under-mou.html> (accessed on July 7, 2017)

- **Bangladeshi PM urges UNHCR to ask Myanmar into taking back Rohingya refugees**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the UNHCR and others in the international community to pursue Myanmar to take back Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh as it only added to the socioeconomic problems to Bangladesh. The government had identified some island areas for rehabilitation of the Myanmar refugees and planned to build necessary infrastructures, shelter, schools and hospitals for them.³⁵

- **Illegal trade behind China account freeze**

The Business community was shaken by last week's China's decision to freeze more than 100 accounts held by Myanmar traders at Chinese banks. The Chinese authorities said they had investigated about 350 accounts at branches in Ruili, a town on the border with Myanmar, to determine if they were connected to illegal activity, particularly smuggling and gambling. Of these accounts, 132 were in the name of Myanmar citizens. Traders do not believe the reason given by the Chinese authorities; they think that the real purpose is to stop the trade of rice and sugar into China, as these products are not officially permitted by the Chinese government but are regularly smuggled across the border.³⁶

- **Myanmar, India strengthen marine security, economy**

Myanmar and India have vowed to strengthen political and security cooperation and deepen their economic corridor, Minister for State Counsellor's Office U Kyaw Tint Swe said while addressing the 9th India-ASEAN Delhi Dialogue in New Delhi on July 5. In his keynote speech at the 9th India-ASEAN Delhi Dialogue, he said areas of cooperation, including maritime security, trade promotion, and connectivity as well as fighting against extremists, would promote bilateral ties.³⁷

North America

Canada

- **Prime Minister concludes successful G20 Summit in Germany**

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau promoted open, progressive trade that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it during his G-20 Summit meetings in

³⁵ "Bangladeshi PM urges UNHCR to ask Myanmar into taking back Rohingya refugees", *Mizzima*, July 10, 2017,

<http://www.mizzima.com/news-domestic-regional/bangladeshi-pm-urges-unhcr-ask-myanmar-taking-back-rohingya-refugees> (accessed on July 10, 2017)

³⁶ "Illegal trade behind China account freeze", *Frontier Myanmar*, July 9, 2017, <http://frontiermyanmar.net/en/illegal-trade-behind-china-account-freeze> (accessed on July 9, 2017)

³⁷ "Myanmar, India strengthen marine security, economy", *Myanmar Times*, July 6, 2017, <http://www.mmmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/26688-myanmar-india-strengthen-marine-security-economy.html> (accessed on 8 July 2017)

Hamburg, Germany. He also emphasized the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment, and the need to take action now to address climate change and build clean growth economies that work for everyone. Prime Minister Trudeau reiterated Canada's commitment to work with partners at home and abroad to develop a coordinated global response to counter radicalization that strengthens security and safeguards human rights. Leaders also reaffirmed their commitment to achieving the sustainable development goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In support of these goals, Prime Minister Trudeau highlighted Canada's recently launched Feminist International Assistance Policy, which focuses assistance on the poorest and most vulnerable. This policy recognizes that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are the best ways to build a more peaceful, inclusive, and prosperous world.³⁸

- **Justin Trudeau, Angela Merkel Meet To Go Over G20 Game Plan**

Whether or not the world's wealthiest countries should promise not to pay ransoms to terrorist kidnappers formed part of the discussions about international security as G20 meetings got underway in Germany. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau pledged more than a year ago to push other world leaders to stop paying kidnappers after Canadians John Risdell and Robert Hall were killed by a terrorist group in the Philippines in April and June 2016. A Canadian official, speaking on background, said the current draft of the final document outlining what the leaders agreed to at the G20 in Hamburg currently includes the ransom discussions — at Trudeau's urging. Canada has long had an unofficial policy against paying ransoms but has done so on some occasions, including in 2009 when it paid \$1.1 million to an al-Qaida affiliate in Africa to free diplomats Robert Fowler and Louis Guay. Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Trudeau at the start of a bilateral meeting that he was very happy to hear Trudeau's "interventions" in the terrorism discussions and would be backing him all the way.³⁹

- **After years of missteps, Canadian military officials hope procurement now on track**

The Defence Department official responsible for overseeing the \$6-billion-per-year procurement system, which has been criticized far and wide in recent years over a perceived failure to deliver critical military equipment. The problems have been blamed on poor planning, red tape and internal bickering, which has tied up efforts to buy new aircraft, naval ships and other equipment. There were expectations that the Liberal government would finally start to unravel the problem with its new defence policy, which

³⁸ Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister Of Canada, "Prime Minister concludes successful G20 Summit in Germany," <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2017/07/08/prime-minister-concludes-successful-g20-summit-germany>, Accessed on 10 July 2017.

³⁹ Mia Rabson, "Justin Trudeau, Angela Merkel Meet To Go Over G20 Game Plan," http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2017/07/07/justin-trudeau-angela-merkel-meet-to-go-over-g20-game-plan_a_23020865/, Accessed on 10 July 2017.

promised an extra \$62 billion for the military over the next 20 years. But the policy made little mention of the procurement system, even though its proper functioning will be all the more critical if and when the promised new defence spending starts to flow.⁴⁰

The United States

- **G20 leaders' statement on climate change highlights rift with US**

World leaders have made clear the US's isolated stance on climate change, with 19 of the G20 countries affirming their commitment to the "irreversible" Paris climate agreement. After lengthy negotiations, the final joint statement from the meeting in Hamburg notes Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Paris deal while stating that the world's other major economies all still support the international effort to slow dangerous global warming. World leaders have made clear the US's isolated stance on climate change, with 19 of the G20 countries affirming their commitment to the "irreversible" Paris climate agreement. After lengthy negotiations that stretched well into Saturday, the final joint statement from the meeting in Hamburg notes Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Paris deal while stating that the world's other major economies all still support the international effort to slow dangerous global warming.⁴¹

- **After the G20, the US may become a global pariah**

The United States is increasingly likely to find itself as a pariah nation on the global stage. The United States is as isolated as it has ever been on climate change, which is hardly surprising as Trump was the only leader to withdraw his nation from the Paris COP21 climate agreement, signed by 175 countries. The EU announced it had already negotiated its own trade deal with Japan, following the framework for a similar pact with Canada. The United States has failed even to begin any meaningful bilateral negotiations for such free trade mechanisms with either the UK or Japan, though bilateral pacts are what Trump has advocated loudly and repeatedly.⁴²

- **U.S.-Russian ceasefire deal holding in southwest Syria**

A U.S.-Russian brokered ceasefire for southwest Syria held through the day on 09 July 2017, a monitor and rebels said, in the first peacemaking effort of the war by the U.S. government under President Trump. The United States, Russia and Jordan reached the "de-escalation agreement," which appeared to give Trump a diplomatic achievement at his first meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the G20 summit in Germany. A

⁴⁰ The Canada Press, "After years of missteps, Canadian military officials hope procurement now on track," <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/military-procurement-national-defence-canada-spending-1.4197017>, Accessed on 10 July 2017.

⁴¹ Oliver Milman, "G20 leaders' statement on climate change highlights rift with US," <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/08/g20-climate-change-leaders-statement-paris-agreement>, Accessed on 10 July 2017.

⁴² David A. Andelman, "After the G20, the US may become a global pariah," <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/07/09/opinions/trump-g20-landmines-opinion-andelman/index.html>, Accessed on 10 July 2017.

senior U.S. State Department official involved in the talks said further discussions would be necessary to decide crucial aspects of the agreement, including who will monitor its enforcement. Several ceasefires have crumbled, however, since the onset of the conflict.⁴³

- **President Trump Says Mexico Will 'Absolutely' Pay for Border Wall**

President Trump and Mexico's President Enrique Peña Nieto met for their first face-to-face meeting since Trump took office with plans for a border wall still looming and Trump asserting that he'll "absolutely" send the bill to Mexico. President Trump repeated his claim – in the presence of the Mexican leader – that America's southern neighbour would pay for a border wall. President Peña Nieto allowed Mr. Trump's comments to go unchallenged when the two leaders met on the sidelines of the G20 meeting in Hamburg. Asked by reporters if he expected Mexico to finance a border wall, Trump responded: "Absolutely." Peña Nieto sat silently next to him. The meeting – the first between the two leaders since Trump took office – again highlighted Trump's insensitivities toward Mexico, while Peña Nieto's passivity brought back bad memories for many Mexicans.⁴⁴

- **US has told Russia to De-escalate Ukraine Eastern Violence**

During his first official visit to Kyiv Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said that the U.S. has told Russia it must take the first steps to de-escalate violence in Eastern Ukraine. Mr. Tillerson has named former U.S. Ambassador to NATO Kurt Volker to serve as Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations. Mr. Volker, who was traveling with Tillerson to Ukraine, will also engage regularly with all parties handling the Ukraine negotiations under the so-called Normandy Format — Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine.⁴⁵

Mexico

- **Spurned by Trump, China and Mexico talk about a trade deal**

President Trump threatened to slap tariffs on China and Mexico during his campaign. Now the two nations could team up for their own trade deal. China's ambassador to Mexico, Qiu Xiaoyi, emphasized that China is ready to talk to Mexico about a "free trade agreement." Trump has threatened to withdraw from NAFTA, and he frequently labels it a terrible deal. Trump blames Mexico and NAFTA for the sharp decline in American manufacturing jobs. Mexico, meanwhile, is looking elsewhere for new economic alliances. And China say it's game. Mexico's economic secretary, Ildefonso Guajardo, plans to visit

⁴³ Ellen Francis, "U.S.-Russian ceasefire deal holding in southwest Syria," <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKBN19U08D>, Accessed on 10 July 2017.

⁴⁴ Vivian Salama and Darlene Superville, "President Trump Says Mexico Will 'Absolutely' Pay for Border Wall," <http://time.com/4849399/g20-donald-trump-enrique-pena-nieto-meeting-border-wall/> and David Agren, "Trump humiliates Mexican president again over border wall," <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jul/07/trump-mexico-border-wall-pena-nieto-g20-summit>, Accessed on 10 July 2017.

⁴⁵ Nike Ching, "US has Told Russia to De-escalate Ukraine Eastern Violence," <https://www.voanews.com/a/tillerson-ukraine/3934541.html>, Accessed on 10 July 2017.

China in September. But it's not clear how much genuine interest there is in a trade deal, or if the parties are just posturing.⁴⁶

- **Trump, Pena Nieto pledge to renegotiate NAFTA**

President Donald Trump emphasized the importance of renegotiating a longstanding continental trade agreement in a meeting with his Mexican counterpart. The White House said in a statement that Trump and President Enrique Pena Nieto discussed ways “to help workers in both countries” as part of the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. A readout from the Mexican government said the two men underscored “the importance of modernizing” NAFTA in a way that “results in tangible benefits for the economies and societies of North America.”⁴⁷

Chile

- **Bachelet, Kuczynski ratify Declaration of Lima at first Peru-Chile Binational Cabinet**

Chilean President Michelle Bachelet and her Peruvian counterpart Pedro Pablo Kuczynski signed the Declaration of Lima to round off the countries’ First Binational Cabinet held on July 7, 2017. The major fields included social affairs and cultural issues; security and defense; foreign trade, investments, tourism, science and technology; environment, energy and mining issues; and border integration. By adopting this Declaration, the Governments of Peru and Chile have reiterated their commitment to the values and principles of international law, particularly those related to the defense of the rule of law, as well as respect to democracy and human rights. Both the leaders highlighted the commitments undertaken in the Joint Declaration signed in Santiago de Chile on November 29, 2016. Ms. Bachelet and Mr. Kuczynski reiterated their commitment to the Pacific Alliance and the new stage of the regional integration bloc, and expressed their readiness to actively participate in dialogues on potential alternatives to apply the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP 11). Progress on the commitments of the Declaration will be assessed at the 2nd Peru-Chile Binational Cabinet, set to take place in Chile in 2018.⁴⁸

- **Cuban Regime Resents Human Rights Clause in Bilateral Agreement with European Union**

The Cuban regime said it considers the human rights clause imposed by the European Union unnecessary. Elio Rodriguez Perdomo, the island’s representative to Europe and

⁴⁶ Patrick Gillespie, “Spurned by Trump, China and Mexico talk about a trade deal,” <http://money.cnn.com/2017/07/05/news/economy/mexico-china-trade-deal/index.html>, Accessed on 10 July 2017.

⁴⁷ ----, “Trump, Pena Nieto pledge to renegotiate NAFTA,” <http://www.macombdaily.com/article/MD/20170707/NEWS/170709719>, Accessed on 10 July 2017.

⁴⁸ “Bachelet Kuczynski Ratify Declaration of Lima at First Peru-Chile Binational Cabinet,” July 9, 2017, <http://santiagotimes.cl/2017/07/09/bachelet-kuczynski-ratify-declaration-of-lima-at-first-peru-chile-binational-cabinet/>, Accessed on July 10, 2017.

Canada, described the approval of the island's agreement with the EU as an overall "positive step," but recently took exception to the human rights clause included in it. The agreement was signed in Brussels in December 2016, making Cuba the last Latin American nation to reach a bilateral agreement with the European community. According to the official website of the Cuban Foreign Ministry, Rodríguez described the human rights clause as both "unnecessary" and as an "interference." The resolution seeks to improve the lives of Cubans by holding the island's government to higher human rights standards. Cuba is frequently listed as one of the nations most often violating international standards for human rights. The country often appears in last place worldwide for press freedom rankings. The clause warns that the agreement signed with Europe will be suspended in the event of a violation of its human rights provisions. According to Rodríguez, the resolution damages "the principles of respect, equality and reciprocity" included in the agreement. The clause was also called "unacceptable" by the National Assembly of People's Power, which issued a statement July 6, 2017 saying that the clause "misrepresents" the reality of the situation on the island.⁴⁹

- **Campaigning for Venezuela's Constituent Assembly Gets Underway**

After three months of opposition-led protests aimed at toppling the Bolivarian government of Venezuela, the nation's National Constituent Assembly campaign got underway on July 9, 2017, which aims to stop the violence and promote dialogue. A total of 6,120 candidates will participate in the electoral campaign which will culminate on July 27. The process will be in two stages. The first will include 3,546 municipal candidates vying for a spot to represent their respective territories. The second will include 2,574 aspiring sector applicants who will visit workers, employers, students, people with disabilities, campesinos, fishermen, and pensioners to discuss and debate proposals. The final vote will be held on July 30, with nearly 20 million Venezuelans set to cast their ballot, according to the National Electoral Council. When voting is complete, the National Constituent Assembly will be composed of 545 Venezuelans. The final tally will include 364 territorial and 173 sector representatives: one per municipality; two per state capital; seven for each capital region; and eight Indigenous constituents selected in accordance with their respective customs and traditions.

Amid growing right-wing sabotage which included the torching of 40 tons of subsidized food and a helicopter terrorist attack against the Supreme Court and Ministry of Interior, Justice and Peace headquarters in the past two weeks, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has called for the ANC to help foster dialogue and peace in the country.

⁴⁹ Sabrina Matrino, "Cuban Regime Resents Human Rights Clause in Bilateral Agreement with European Union," July 7, 2017, <https://panampost.com/sabrina-martin/2017/07/07/cuban-regime-resents-human-rights-clause-in-bilateral-agreement-with-european-union/>, Accessed on July 10, 2017.

However, most anti-government groups have chosen to boycott the process aimed at bringing peace to the country.⁵⁰

Russia

- **Russia and India (Brahmos project)**

The June 1st Petersburg Vision Statement after Modi-Putin Summit laid down roadmap for lifting bilateral economic partnership across areas that were never considered in the past. However, the next challenge is to translate this vision into action to upgrade ties to the next level. Russian Industry and Trade Minister Denis Manturov in an interview with ET said that both sides have identified 19 projects in the field of transport infrastructure, new technologies in pharmaceuticals, aircraft and automobile construction, diamond extraction and agriculture, and a new investment protection pact is in the works. He said that the aviation industry as well as the development of railway infrastructure besides IT has better prospects for Russian investments in India. Another high-tech project that Russia and India are looking at is the production of power plants based on aviation gas generators. He said that the current impediments for Russian investment in India are unforeseen changes in Indian legislation. One discriminatory measure for Russian companies was the refusal to provide bank guarantees while concluding contracts under government tenders. The greatest prospects for India's investment in Russia are in the "Aluminium Valley" project in Eastern Siberia. This will be a special economic zone in the Krasnoyarsk region.⁵¹

At the International Maritime Defense Show in St. Petersburg Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin specifically pointed to the Russian government's constant attention to the model of the supersonic Russian-Indian BrahMos cruise missile. In an interview with Sputnik, Alexander Maksichev, managing co-director of BrahMos Aerospace, said that "in St. Petersburg, we are demonstrating the full range of combat capabilities of BrahMos, which is capable of equally effectively destroying both sea and coastal targets." He added that "in July-August, we are completing the integration of the missile with the Su-30MKI fighter jet, something that will significantly expand BrahMos' combat capabilities." Maksichev also said that many Asian countries have already signaled an interest in buying the missile, with BrahMos Aerospace currently focusing on meeting India's internal needs. BrahMos Aerospace has been engaged with seven countries in Asia

⁵⁰ "Campaigning for Venezuelas Constituent Assembly Gets Underway," July 9, 2017, http://www.telesur.tv/english/news/Campaigning-for-Venezuelas-Constituent-Assembly-Gets-Underway-20170709-0012.html?utm_source=planisys&utm_medium=NewsletterIngles&utm_campaign=NewsletterIngles&utm_content=7, Accessed on July 10, 2017.

⁵¹Dipanjan Roy Choudhury, "Supply of Russian civil aircraft, a promising Venture: Russian Trade Minister Denis Manturov", *Economic Time*, July 3, 2017. <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/opinion/interviews/supply-of-russian-civil-aircraft-a-promising-venture/articleshow/59416362.cms> Accessed on July 9, 2017.

and the Pacific, Latin America and the Middle East for selling Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter jets armed with BrahMos cruise missiles.⁵²

- **Russia and Uzbekistan**

Uzbek Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov said on July 5 said that Uzbekistan has no plans to rejoin a post-Soviet security bloc Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) led by Russia, indicating the country's policy would remain the same despite a leadership change. Following Karimov's death and pledges by his successor, former Prime Minister Shavkat Mirziyoyev, to develop a strategic partnership with Russia, some have wondered whether Tashkent would rejoin the military alliance.⁵³

- **On Syria Resolution**

Russia, Iran and Turkey on July 5 failed to finalise an agreement on creating four de-escalation zones in Syria after Ankara raised objections. Russia and Iran, which back President Bashar al-Assad's government, and Turkey, which supports some of the rebels, aim to reach a consensus on the zones by the end of August, when their delegations are set to meet again in the Kazakh capital. The Turkish delegation objected to the adoption of any documents related to the implementation of mechanisms of the agreement on the de-escalation zones. The failure is a setback for Moscow, the main architect of the plan. If the agreement on de-escalation zones is finalised, Russia, Iran and Turkey will be able to quickly-within weeks-deploy forces such as military police on the borders of those zones.⁵⁴

- **Putin and Trump Meet at the sidelines of G20 Summit**

In a series of tweets on July 9 about his G-20 meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, US President Donald Trump said it was time to work "constructively with Russia," and said that he and Putin "discussed forming an impenetrable Cyber Security unit so that election hacking, & many other negative things, will be guarded." However, his tweet

⁵²“Weapon of the Future: Russian-Indian BrahMos Missile to Change Arms Market”, *Sputnik*, July 1, 2017. <https://sputniknews.com/military/201707011055145736-russia-india-brahmos-missile-production/> Accessed on July 8, 2017.

⁵³“Uzbekistan Says Won't Rejoin Russia-Led Security Bloc”, *US News*, July 5. <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2017-07-05/uzbekistan-says-wont-rejoin-russia-led-security-bloc> Accessed on July 9, 2017.

⁵⁴“Russia, Turkey, Iran fail to agree on Syria de-escalation zones”, *Nasdaq*, July 5, 2017. <http://www.nasdaq.com/article/russia-turkey-iran-fail-to-agree-on-syria-deescalation-zones-20170705-00807> Accessed on July 9, 2017.

changed by the evening of the same day as he said that “just because the two discussed it ‘doesn't mean I think it can happen’, adding that ‘it can't’.”⁵⁵

Meanwhile, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin praised President Trump over his meeting with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, saying Trump “handled it brilliantly.” He said Trump “fully addressed” the issue of Russia’s alleged interference in the U.S. election during the meeting with Putin on Friday at the G20 summit, along with other key issues. According to him, the meeting was substantive because “Trump focused on the cease-fire in Syria, which is a major accomplishment. He talked about Ukraine and he talked about North Korea.”⁵⁶

Speaking to reporters after the meeting between the two heads of states, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who was in the room with the two presidents, said that Trump had “pressed” Putin on Russia’s interference in the 2016 election. Almost simultaneously, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who had also been present at the talks, told a separate news conference that Trump had informed Putin he “accepts” Russia’s denials that it was behind the election meddling.⁵⁷

Russian President Vladimir Putin on July 8 said that he thinks President Trump agreed with his assurances that Moscow had not interfered in the 2016 presidential election, but suggested that reporters ask the US president what he thought. The White House did not confirm or deny on it. Russia and the United States continue to disagree on the matter of Russia’s ally, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Putin refuted Tillerson’s statement that Assad has “no future” in Syrian politics, saying Tillerson is a “respected man” whom “we

⁵⁵Katherine Faulders and Dean Schaber, “Trump now says Russia-US Cyber Security unit can't happen”, *ABC News*, July 9, 2017. <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/trump-now-russia-us-cyber-security-unit-happen/story?id=48537628> Accessed on July 10, 2017.

⁵⁶Nicki Rossol, “Trump 'handled it brilliantly' with Putin, Mnuchin says”, *ABC News*, July 9, 2017. <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/trump-now-russia-us-cyber-security-unit-happen/story?id=48537628> Accessed on July 10, 2017.

⁵⁷Patrick Reevel, “Kremlin and White House disagree over remarks from Trump-Putin meeting”, *ABC News*, July 8, 2017. <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/kremlin-white-house-disagree-remarks-trump-putin-meeting/story?id=48513031> Accessed on July 10, 2017.

respect and love” but “he is not a Syrian citizen,” and that Assad’s future “will be decided by the Syrian people.”⁵⁸

- **Russia and Sanctions**

The Russians are threatening to retaliate if US lawmakers try to ban the cyber security company Kaspersky Labs from Pentagon software contracts. Russian Communications Minister Nikolay Nikiforov said in an interview on June 30 that any “unilateral political sanctions” could draw a response from Russia. It is unclear what exactly the response would be, but Nikiforov implied his country could stop hiring American companies for its tech solutions. He said Russia uses “a huge proportion of American software and hardware solutions in the IT sphere, even in very sensitive areas.” The threat comes a day after the Senate Armed Services Committee voted to ban the Department of Defense from using Kaspersky software. The committee have raised concerns over the company’s close ties to Russia.⁵⁹

- **Russia and the Cyber Attacks**

Ukraine has blamed Russian security services for a massive cyberattack (NotPetya ransomware attack) that started in the two week back in Ukraine and eventually spread to computers across the world. Ukraine’s security agency, the SBU, said in a statement on July 1 the attack bore resemblances to past hacks of Ukrainian infrastructure by the Russian security services.⁶⁰

South Asia

Afghanistan

- **Taliban to be designated as global terrorists if pursues violence: Ghani**

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani once again called on the Taliban group to join peace process, warning that the group will be designated as global terrorists if its pursues

⁵⁸“Putin says he thinks Trump ‘agreed’ with assurances that Russia did not interfere in U.S. elections”, *MSN*, July 9, 2017. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/putin-says-he-thinks-trump-%E2%80%99agreed%E2%80%99-with-assurances-that-russia-did-not-interfere-in-us-elections/ar-BBDZGXb#image=BBDPaPB|41> Accessed on July 10, 2017.

⁵⁹Gordon Graham, “[Vote to ban Kaspersky irks Russia](http://www.bostonherald.com/business/business%20markets/2017/07/vote%20to%20ban%20kaspersky%20irks%20russia)”, *Boston Herald Radio*, July 1, 2017. [http://www.bostonherald.com/business/business%20markets/2017/07/vote to ban kaspersky irks russia](http://www.bostonherald.com/business/business%20markets/2017/07/vote%20to%20ban%20kaspersky%20irks%20russia) Accessed on July 9, 2017.

⁶⁰“Ukraine Blames Russia for Massive Cyberattack”, *Voice of America*, July 1, 2017. <https://www.voanews.com/a/ukraine-blames-russia-for-massive-cyber-attack/3924194.html> Accessed on July 9, 2017.

violence. President Ghani further added that the government of national unity has a crystal clear approach and policy towards peace process since the beginning of its formation. The remarks by President Ghani are delivered at a time when the Taliban group is not ready for the peace talks and has repeatedly rejected to participate in reconciliation despite persistent efforts by the government to end the violence through negotiations.⁶¹

- **Afghan intelligence chief vows support to prevent interventions in elections**

The Afghan Intelligence, National Directorate of Security (NDS) chief, Masoom Stanikzai has pledged the support of the directorate to help in preventing the interventions of the security personnel in the upcoming elections. Stanikzai made the commitment during a conference organized to brief regarding the parliamentary and districts council elections scheduled for the next year. The Afghanistan Independent Elections Commission (IEC) announced the date for the long waited parliamentary elections last month.⁶²

- **29 Taliban Insurgents Lay Down Arms, Join Peace Process**

At least 29 Taliban insurgents laid down arms and joined the peace process in western Farah and central Uruzgan provinces last week, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) said in a statement on 04 July 2017. According to the statement the group was involved in “planning and coordinating suicide attacks, and carrying out other destructive and terrorist activities in Dehrawood.” This comes after a group of 11 armed Taliban fighters also renounced violence and joined the peace process in Bala Bolok district of Farah after the group handed over their weapons to security forces, the statement read.⁶³

- **Afghanistan and Turkmenistan Sign 7 Agreements During President Ghani’s Visit**

The Afghan and Turkmenistan officials have signed seven agreements for bilateral cooperation during President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani’s visit to Ashgabat. The agreements signed between the two countries including bilateral cooperation in the field of education, transportation, railway network establishment, border cooperation, and other fields.⁶⁴

⁶¹ "Taliban to be designated as global terrorists if pursues violence: Ghani", *Khaama Press*, 09 July 2017. <http://www.khaama.com/taliban-to-be-designated-as-global-terrorists-if-pursues-violence-ghani-03110> accessed on 10 July 2017.

⁶² "Afghan intelligence chief vows support to prevent interventions in elections", *Khaama Press*, 03 July 2017. <http://www.khaama.com/afghan-intelligence-chief-vows-support-to-prevent-interventions-in-elections-03064> accessed on 04 July 2017.

⁶³ "29 Taliban Insurgents Lay Down Arms, Join Peace Process", *Tolonews*, 04 July 2017. <http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/29-taliban-insurgents-lay-down-arms-join-peace-process> accessed on 05 July 2017.

⁶⁴ "Afghanistan and Turkmenistan sign 7 agreements during President Ghani’s visit", *Khaama Press*, July 4, 2017, <http://www.khaama.com/afghanistan-and-turkmenistan-sign-7-agreements-during-president-ghanis-visit-03075> (accessed on July 10, 2017).

- **Hizb-e-Islami To Draw Up Taliban Peace Talks Strategy**

In a move to bring the Taliban to the peace talks tables, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar-led Hizb-e-Islami has started working on a new peace process strategy between government and the Taliban, the group's top negotiator and member of its political wing Mohammad Amin Karim said on 4th July 2017. This comes amid a stalemate regarding peace talks between government and the Taliban. He said the new strategy will be announced within a few weeks and in consensus with political forces in the country and government.⁶⁵

- **Afghanistan Agrees With Joint Operations Along The Durand Line Monitored By US**

The Afghan government has said it agrees with the proposal for the joint operations with Pakistan along the Durand Line. The Office of the President, ARG Palace, said the operations will be conducted on both sides of the line and will be monitored by the US. The President Ghani has told the members of the Senate Armed Services Committee that the "US support to Afghanistan is not taken for granted."⁶⁶

- **Afghanistan Reacts to Iran's Comments on Dam Projects**

The Ministry of Energy and Water of Afghanistan said Iran has used four times more water from Helmand Rivers than stipulated in the Helmand River Treaty. Building dams on Helmand River is Kabul's top priority which is aimed at managing the country's waters and improving the national economy. Iran has built over 30 water dams on rivers which flow to Afghanistan – stopping the flow of water to Afghanistan.⁶⁷

Bangladesh

- **World Bank, IMF unhappy with VAT law suspension⁶⁸**

The World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has sent a letter to the Finance Ministry saying they were disappointed about the VAT Law 2012 not being implemented this fiscal year. In the letter, the World Bank asked the government to implement the law immediately saying without the new law, the government's revenue will slow down along with negatively impact GDP growth and create difficulties in getting foreign financial assistance.

⁶⁵ Karim Amini, "Hizb-e-Islami To Draw Up Taliban Peace Talks Strategy", *Tolo News*, July 4, 2017, <http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/hizb-e-islami-draw-taliban-peace-talks-strategy> (accessed on July 10, 2017)

⁶⁶ "Afghanistan Agrees With Joint Operations Along The Durand Line Monitored By US", *Khaama Press*, July 5, 2017, <http://www.khaama.com/afghanistan-agrees-with-joint-operations-along-the-durand-line-monitored-by-us-03083> (accessed on July 10, 2017)

⁶⁷ "Afghanistan Reacts to Iran's Comments on Dam Projects", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, July 6, 2017, http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=18546 (accessed on July 10, 2017)

⁶⁸ Asif Showkat Kallol, "World Bank, IMF unhappy with VAT law suspension", *Dhaka Tribune*, July 7, 2017, <http://www.dhakatribune.com/business/economy/2017/07/07/world-bank-imf-unhappy-vat-law-suspension/> (accessed on July 7, 2017)

- **BNP's hints for joining polls make AL nervous: Khosru**⁶⁹

BNP standing committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury on Saturday (July 8) said that the news of the BNP's willingness to contest the next general elections has shaken the 'nerve' of the government. He also observed that the ruling Bangladesh Awami League (AL) has no scope to approach the people seeking votes as every citizen of the country knows about its "misdeeds and wrongdoings".

- **BNP forms candidate selection body for next polls**⁷⁰

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has formed a three-member "secret" committee to prepare a list of potential candidates for the upcoming parliamentary polls. The committee was formed around two months ago, involving three members of the BNP standing committee. The selection committee has already started to find out the best candidates from a pool of qualified contestants. It will also recommend candidates from other member parties of the BNP-led 20-party alliance for the polls.

- **Another state-owned bank grappled with loan defaults**⁷¹

Bangladesh Development Bank Limited (BDBL), a state-owned bank, is grappled with high level of loan defaults. The crisis of this bank came to limelight after Sonali Bank and BASIC Bank, two state-owned banks, suffered similar crises earlier. About 60 per cent loans of the bank are defaulted due to irregularities and corruption. The crisis is attributed to political influence in recruitment of the chairman and managing directors (MDs) and disbursement of loans attributes to such crisis.

- **Lawmakers blast SC verdict**⁷²

Lawmakers yesterday expressed their dissatisfaction over the recent Supreme Court's verdict scrapping the 16th constitutional amendment that restored the parliament's authority to remove Supreme Court judges on grounds of incapacity or misconduct. Taking part in an unscheduled debate in the House, they strongly criticized appellate division and its pronouncement that the Jatiya Sangsad has no power to remove Supreme Court judges.

⁶⁹ "BNP's hints for joining polls make AL nervous: Khosru," *Prothom Alo*, July 8, 2017, <http://en.prothom-alo.com/bangladesh/news/153153/BNP%E2%80%99s-hints-for-joining-polls-make-AL-nervous> (accessed on July 8, 2017)

⁷⁰ "BNP forms candidate selection body for next polls," *Dhaka Tribune*, July 9, 2017, <http://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/politics/2017/07/09/bnp-forms-candidate-selection-body-next-polls/> (accessed July 9, 2017)

⁷¹ "Another state-owned bank grappled with loan defaults," *Prothom Alo*, July 9, 2017, <http://en.prothom-alo.com/economy/news/153291/Another-state-owned-bank-grappled-with-loan> (accessed on July 9, 2017)

⁷² "Lawmakers blast SC verdict," *The Independent*, July 10, 2017, <http://www.theindependentbd.com/post/103234> (accessed on July 10, 2017)

नेपाल

नेपाल द्वारा चीन को भूमार्ग और पोर्ट हेतु प्रस्ताव :

नेपाल चीन को एक ऐसा प्रस्ताव भेजने की तैयारी में है जिससे वह चीन द्वारा दो थल मार्गों और तीन बंदरगाहों के माध्यम से यूरोप से जुड़ सकेगा .इसके लिए नेपाल के वाणिज्य मंत्रालय ने एक ड्राफ्ट विदेश मंत्रालय को भेजा है प्रस्ताव के समझौते परिवहन पारगमन में भविष्य निकट कि कहा ने मंत्रालय वाणिज्य . अमल को समझौते इस जिससे होगी बात पर प्रोटोकॉल के समझौते इस में चर्चा इस .जाएगी की चर्चा पर जायेग लाया मेंा और नेपाल चीन के माध्यम से तीसरे देश के साथ व्यापार कर सकेगा.⁷³

नेपाल के विदेश मंत्री महारा भारत की यात्रा पर:

नेपाल के उपप्रधानमंत्री और विदेश मंत्री कृष्ण बहादुर महारा भारत दौरे पर है और सोमवार को वे भारत की विदेश मंत्री सुषमा स्वराज से मिले और सहयोग के कई क्षेत्रों जैसे और व्यापार ,जल ,उर्जा ,सुरक्षा , प्रतिबंधित ,आपूर्ति की गैस घरेलू ,प्रोजेक्ट पंचेश्वर ने महारा में बैठक इस .हुई बातचीत में बारे के संसाधनों स्वराज मंत्री विदेश में बैठक इस .हुई बातचीत पर आदि टैक्स सेल्स और बात की बदलने को मुद्रा भारतीय ने नेपाल में स्थानीय चुनाव के सफलतम तरीके से होने पर महारा को बधाईयाँ दी.⁷⁴

देउबा केबिनेट बढ़ाने के दबाव में:

दूसरे चरण के अस्सी फीसदी परिणाम आ चुके है और देउबा पर खुद की ही पार्टी का दबाव है कि वे केबिनेट का विस्तार करेसरका अनुसार के समझौते प्रारम्भिक .र के मुख्य घटक आपस को मंत्रालयों 20 अन्य .रहेंगे पास के केंद्र माओवादी मंत्रालय ९ और पास इके कांग्रेस नेपाली मंत्रालय 11 जिसमे ,बांटेंगे में ,है मंत्रालय आठ में कबिनेट के देउबा फिलहाल हाल अभी .होंगे वितरित में दलों समर्थित मंत्रालय सात नेपा तीन जिसमे जिसमेली कांग्रेस के पास और शेष माओवादी केंद्र के पास तथा एक नेपाल लोकतान्त्रिक फोरम के पास है की मंत्रालयों चार वे बाद के होने शामिल में सरकार द्वारा के पार्टी प्रजातंत्र राष्ट्रीय लेकिन . ज्यादा से ज्यादा में दल कांग्रेस नेपाली खुद तरफ दूसरी वही और रहे कर मांगमंत्रालय अपने पास रखने का दबाव दे रहा है .है दबाव काफी ऊपर के देउबा में स्थिति इस .⁷⁵

राष्ट्रीय जनता पार्टी ने चुनाव आयोग में पंजीकरण कराया:

राष्ट्रीय जनता पार्टी ने शुक्रवार को चुनाव आयोग को अपना पंजीकरण कराने के लिए आवेदन किया है . उ ने दलों शासक बाद इसकेनको मांगो पर विचार करने के लिए एक सप्ताह का समय माँगा है पा ज रा . द्वितीय और प्रथम हमने इसीलिए है रही कर नहीं पूरा को मांगों हमारी सरकार कि कहा ने नेताओं के ,है रहे कर पंजीकरण पार्टी बतौर में आयोग चुनाव हम अब और किया बहिष्कार का चुनावों के चरण प्रांत जिससे संख्या २ में तीसरे चरण के चुनाव में भाग ले सकेंगे .⁷⁶

⁷³ Sanjeev Giri, "Nepal to seek access to two land, three sea ports in china:", The Kathmandu Post, 3 July 2017,

<http://epaper.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2017-07-03/1>

⁷⁴ Kamal Dev Bhattari, "Mahara raises four issues with India", The Kathmandu Post, 4 July 2017,

<http://epaper.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2017-07-04/1>

⁷⁵ "Deuba struggles to expand Cabinet", The Kathmandu Post, 5 July 2017,

<http://epaper.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2017-07-05/1>

⁷⁶ "RJP-N applies at EC for Party registration", The Kathmandu Post, 8 July 2017,

<http://epaper.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2017-07-08/3>

Pakistan

- **Pakistan and Tajikistan**

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, while visiting Dushanbe for two days (July 5th and 6th) met the Tajik President Emomali Rahmon Prime Minister Qohir Rasulzoda and other important ministers of the Tajik Cabinet. The basic focus of the visit was on regional connectivity, trade and energy. Pakistan and Tajikistan agreed on July 5th to explore new avenues of cooperation by increasing collaboration in economy, defence and security, agriculture and education. PM Sharif said the two sides also identified the need for increased cooperation in agriculture, industry, education and culture, while stressing that the joint working group on trade, investment and transport would be meeting later in July to explore untapped opportunities in the areas.

He also announced opening of commercial section at Pakistan's embassy in Dushanbe. Sharif stated that Tajikistan's formal accession to the Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement among China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan would facilitate regional integration and boost economic development.⁷⁷

- **Qatar and JIT**

Making a last attempt to invite the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) to Qatar, Prince Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al-Thani sent another letter asking the JIT to record his statement at his palace before submitting its final report to the Supreme Court. During the hearing of petitions filed by opposition parties seeking disqualification of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, the Qatari prince had submitted two letters to the apex court regarding the settlement of London properties with the Sharif family. The JIT had informed the court in May that it had asked Sheikh Hamad to record his statement in this regard.

The sources, however, said the JIT had offered the Qatari prince to either appear in person at its secretariat at the Federal Judicial Academy, Islamabad, or testify through video link from Pakistan's embassy in Doha. However, according to media reports, the JIT could record the statement of the Qatari prince under Section 161 of CrPC at any place, including his residence or office. In case the JIT did not record the statement of the Qatari prince at this stage, the PML-N leadership might produce him as a witness during the time of trial.⁷⁸ JIT would submit its final report to the Supreme Court on July 10th.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ "Accord with Tajikistan on enhancing connectivity", *Dawn*, July 6, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1343579> (accessed on July 10, 2017)

⁷⁸ Malik Asad, "Prince asks JIT to quiz him at Qatar palace", *Dawn*, July 8, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1343887> (accessed on July 10, 2017)

⁷⁹ Malik Asad, "JIT submits Panama probe report to SC today", *Dawn*, July 10, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1344294/jit-submits-panama-probe-report-to-sc-today> (accessed on July 10, 2017)

- **Border shelling Continues on Iran Pakistan border**

As alleged by Pakistan, Iranian border guards fired three mortar shells into Pakistani territory near the Panjgur border in Balochistan. Levies sources said there has been no loss of life as a result of the attack, which was said to be unprovoked.⁸⁰

Indian Ocean Region

- **21st Edition of Malabar Exercise**

India, US, and Japan began 2017 edition of Malabar naval exercise in the Bay of Bengal on 10 July 2017. The Malabar exercise, began in 1992, was an annual bilateral exercise⁸¹ between Indian Navy and US Navy prior to inclusion of Japan as a permanent participant in 19th edition of exercise in 2015.⁸² Japan participated in the 2009, 2011, and 2014 edition of Malabar exercise as a non permanent participant.⁸³ This will be 21st edition of Malabar exercise. The exercise was suspended by US in 1998 after India's nuclear test.⁸⁴ However, the Malabar naval exercise between the two countries was resumed in 2002 and since then it has become an annual bilateral feature. According to a media source during the 2017 edition of Malabar exercise, "the US navy is fielding USS Nimitz, the world's largest aircraft carrier. The Indian Navy's solitary aircraft carrier, INS Vikramaditya, and Japan's Izumo-class helicopter carrier will also be among the 20-odd warships taking part in the exercise."⁸⁵

- **20th Plenary Session of Contact Group Piracy off Coast of Somalia**

The 20th plenary session of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia [CGPCS] held at Balaclava, Mauritius, from 05 July to 07 July 2017.⁸⁶ More than 200 delegates from 20 countries from various international and regional organisations, NGO's and industry associations were participated in this plenary session.⁸⁷ The participants were gathered at Balaclava to discuss policy options to combat piracy and restore

⁸⁰ Syed Ali Shah, "Mortar shells fired into Pakistani territory by Iranian border forces", *Dawn*, July 8, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1344023> (accessed on July 10, 2017)

⁸¹ Malabar Exercise became annual series of bilateral naval exercise since 2002.

⁸² Exercise Malabar – 2016, <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/exercise-malabar-2016>, accessed on 09 July 2017. See also, Indian Express, Significance of the India-US-Japan Malabar naval exercise, <http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/significance-of-the-india-us-japan-malabar-naval-exercise/>, accessed on 09 July 2017.

⁸³ Indian Express, Significance of the India-US-Japan Malabar naval exercise, <http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/significance-of-the-india-us-japan-malabar-naval-exercise/> accessed on 10 July 2017.

⁸⁴ Malabar Exercises, 17 June 2016, <http://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/Hans-Classroom/2016-06-17/Malabar-Exercises/235744>, accessed on 10 July 2017.

⁸⁵ India, US, Japan to begin Malabar drills: All you need to about the naval exercise in Indian Ocean, 07 July 2017, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-us-japan-to-begin-malabar-drills-all-you-need-to-about-the-naval-exercise-in-indian-ocean/story-ssB13XXA3rmYZ8nLyJ0nTP.html>, accessed on 08 July 2017.

⁸⁶ Mauritius Hosting 20th Plenary Session Of Contact Group Piracy Off Coast Of Somalia, 10 July 2017 <http://www.hellenicshippingnews.com/mauritius-hosting-20th-plenary-session-of-contact-group-piracy-off-coast-of-somalia/>, accessed on 10 July 2017.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

maritime safety and security in the western Indian Ocean region.⁸⁸ The Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), formed on January 14, 2009, is a voluntary ad hoc international forum to bring together the stakeholders affected by Somali piracy.⁸⁹

- **Myanmar Focus on Maritime connectivity and Trade**

Myanmar is planned to take advantage of its strategic location between India and China to become a hub of Maritime trade in the region.⁹⁰ During the 15th ASEAN Ports and Shipping Conference 2017, Kyaw Myo, deputy minister for transport and communications of Myanmar, said that the development of ports and shipping industry would be key thrust for Myanmar's integration into the global economy.⁹¹ "Myanmar's transport infrastructure has reached the low end of the Asian benchmark due to our poorly targeted investment for many years. Now it is time to improve our transport infrastructure effectively and systematically with regional and international cooperation," further he said.⁹²

Maldives

- **Maldives withdraws candidacy for UN Human Rights Council**

The Maldives has withdrawn its candidacy for a third term on the United Nations Human Rights Council ahead of the election for the council's 2018-2020 term at the UN General Assembly in September. The permanent mission to the UN in Geneva said the Maldives deferred its candidacy for a later term "in the spirit of regional solidarity and in an effort towards achieving consensus within the Asia Pacific Group". The Maldives was due to compete for one of four seats on the council along with Afghanistan, Malaysia, Fiji, Nepal, Pakistan and Qatar.⁹³

- **Parliament sends out notice of no confidence motion against speaker**

The parliament on 6th April sent to lawmakers the notice of the motion of no confidence sought against Parliament Speaker Abdulla Maseeh. However, a date on which the motion is to be scheduled was not mentioned in the notice. According to the Constitution, the resolution against the Parliament Speaker must be sent to the parliament floor floor debate in the first sitting after issuing the notice, which must take place within a period of ten days sans weekends and public holidays.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Myanmar aims to become Asian maritime hub, July 10, 2017, <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/business/30320301>, accessed on 10 July 2017.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ "Maldives withdraws candidacy for UN Human Rights Council", 6th July 2017, <http://maldivesindependent.com/politics/maldives-withdraws-candidacy-for-un-human-rights-council-131390> (accessed on 9th July 2017)

The no confidence motion of Speaker Maseeh is led by former President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom's lawmaker son, Ahmed Faris Maumoon. The motion was submitted with total 45 signatures from lawmakers of main opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), Jumhoory Party (JP), Adhaalath Party, independent MP's and ruling Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM).⁹⁴

Sri Lanka

- **TN CM Palaniswami calls new Lankan law 'a set back'**

Expressing Shock at the Sri Lankan Parliament passing a new Bill to prevent Tamil Nadu fishermen from fishing in their traditional waters in Palk Bay, the chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami said the new legislation was a severe setback to the diplomatic efforts being taken to resolve the issue amicably. He urged the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to direct the External Affairs Ministry and the Indian Mission in Sri Lanka to lodge India's strong protest against the move. Under the provisions of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (Amendment) Bill of Sri Lanka, the fishing trawlers, as well as fishing gear used in the Lankan territorial waters, would be confiscated, fishermen imprisoned for two years and huge fines up to 50,000 Lankan Rupees will be imposed.⁹⁵

- **Bank of China to open branch**

Bank of China, one of the largest State-owned financial institutions in China is expected to open a branch in Colombo this year, its first in South Asia. A Chinese embassy spokesman told Daily Mirror that it would be opened with an initial capital of US\$90 million. He said the bank's presence in Colombo would facilitate Sri Lanka's financial transactions with China.⁹⁶

- **PM asserts process to draft new Constitution cannot stop**

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe asserted that the process to draft a new Constitution cannot stop. Speaking at a public event in Mannar the Prime Minister said that the Government has been given a mandate to draft a new Constitution and that mandate must be respected. He said that discussions have been held with the Chief Prelates and leaders of other religions on the new Constitution and Buddhism will be given its rightful place in the new Constitution while other religions are also respected.

⁹⁴ "Parliament sends out notice of no confidence motion against speaker", 6th July 017, <http://en.mihaaru.com/parliament-sends-out-notice-of-no-confidence-motion-against-speaker/> (accessed on 10th July 2017)

⁹⁵ "TN CM Palaniswami calls new Lankan law 'a set back'", 9 July 2017, <http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/TN-CM-Palaniswami-calls-new-Lankan-law-a-set-back--132429.html> (accessed on 10 July 2017)

⁹⁶ "Bank of China to open branch", 8 July 2017, <http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/Bank-of-China-to-open-branch-here-132383.html> (accessed on 9 July 2017)

The Chief Prelates of the three main Buddhist chapters decided there is no need for a new Constitution in Sri Lanka.⁹⁷

- **Sri Lanka appreciates HRH Prince Alwaleed of Saudi Arabia for his contribution towards Sri Lanka**

His Royal Highness Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia visited Sri Lanka and had discussions with President Maithripala Sirisena, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and Foreign Minister Ravi Karunanayake on Tuesday, 4th July 2017. The discussions were centred on promoting investment, tourism and tourism related infrastructure and increasing economic activities including air connectivity between Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia.⁹⁸

- **India rejects allegations on proposed projects in Sri Lanka**

India on 6th July rejected allegations raised on some proposed projects and deals with Sri Lanka including the proposed Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement (ETCA). Speaking at the 9th Annual General Meeting of the Indo-Lanka Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Colombo today, the High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka Taranjit Singh Sandhu said that “these are, JOINT projects. These projects bring huge investments, and valuable foreign exchange, for Sri Lanka. They create several thousands, of direct and indirect jobs. We would like you to project, the right message, in your interactions,” he said.⁹⁹

West Asia

Israel

- **UNESCO, Israel & Hebron** - UNESCO passed an anti-Israel resolution for the second time in less than a week on July 7th, to have the Tomb of the Patriarchs, in the Old City of Hebron in the West Bank, inscribed as a Palestinian world heritage site in danger. Twelve countries voted in favor, while three opposed it. Six countries abstained. The resolution slammed “the failure of the Israeli occupying authorities to cease the persistent excavations, tunneling, works, projects and other illegal practices in East Jerusalem, particularly in and around the Old City of

⁹⁷ “PM asserts process to draft new Constitution cannot stop”, 7 July 2017, <http://colombogazette.com/2017/07/07/pm-asserts-process-to-draft-new-constitution-cannot-stop/> (accessed on 10th July 2017)

⁹⁸ “Sri Lanka appreciates HRH Prince Alwaleed of Saudi Arabia for his contribution towards Sri Lanka”, 5th July 2017, <http://www.mfa.gov.lk/index.php/en/media/media-releases/7058-psa> (accessed on 9th July 2017)

⁹⁹ “India rejects allegations on proposed projects in Sri Lanka”, 6 July 2017, <http://colombogazette.com/2017/07/06/india-rejects-allegations-on-proposed-projects-in-sri-lanka/> (accessed on 10 July 2017)

Jerusalem, which are illegal under international law.”¹⁰⁰ Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided to cut one million dollars from its funding to the United Nations so that it can build a museum in Hebron after the resolution was passed.¹⁰¹

- **PM Modi in Israel** – PM Modi made his maiden visit to Israel from July 4th to July 6th. Prime Minister Modi reiterated India and Israel representing two cradles of civilizations, who have maintained their heritage for centuries. Both the Indian and Israeli leaderships envisage the relations to be built on the partnership of development, technology, innovation, entrepreneurship, defence and security. During the visit, PM Modi met Moshe Holtzberg, son of slain US Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg who was killed with his wife in the November 26, 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai; visited a flower farm, a desalination plant and the Israel Museum; addressing a rally for thousands of Indians living in Israel in Hindi; and laid wreaths at a military cemetery in Haifa. He held a working meeting with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin and later met a delegation of Israeli businessmen and entrepreneurs in ‘India-Israel CEOs Forum’. A Joint Statement was issued by both the leaderships in which seven MoUs were signed between the two leaderships.¹⁰²

Turkey

- **President Erdoğan to embark on Gulf tour in bid to ease row between Arab neighbors**¹⁰³

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has said he is planning to embark on a tour of the Arab Gulf in a bid to ease dialogue between Qatar and Saudi Arabia-led states, after the former rejected implementation of the 13-article conditions imposed by its neighbors amid rising tension. “I may have special [diplomatic] traffic after July 15. I want to visit the region once again. We might contribute to the re-establishment of dialogue with a visit to the region. We are planning to visit Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in particular,” Erdoğan told journalists accompanying him on his return from the G-20 Summit in Hamburg.

¹⁰⁰ Raphael Ahren, “At stormy meet, UNESCO declares Hebron an endangered Palestinian site”, *The Times of Israel*, July 7, 2017, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/unesco-votes-to-declare-hebron-an-endangered-site/> (accessed on July 10, 2017); Isabel Kershner, “Unesco Declares Hebron’s Core as Palestinian World Heritage Site”, *The New York Times*, July 7, 2016 <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/07/world/middleeast/unesco-hebron-world-heritage-site-israel-palestinians.html> (accessed on July 10, 2017)

¹⁰¹ Tovah Lazaroff, “Israel to cut \$1 million from UN to build museum in Hebron”, *The Jerusalem Post*, July 7, 2017, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Israel-to-cut-1-million-from-UN-to-build-museum-in-Hebron-499070> (accessed on July 10, 2017)

¹⁰² Herb Keinon, “Netanyahu: Modi trip will add ‘energy’ to Israel-India relationship”, *The Jerusalem Post*, July 7, 2017, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Modis-Visit/Netanyahu-Modi-trip-will-add-energy-to-relationship-499031> (accessed on July 10, 2017)

¹⁰³ <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/president-erdogan-to-embark-on-gulf-tour-in-bid-to-ease-row-between-arab-neighbors.aspx?pageID=238&nID=115293&NewsCatID=510>

He stated that he discussed the Gulf crisis with U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, and stressed to all the leaders he met at the summit the need to find a solution through dialogue. He said his planned visit to the region should not be considered as an effort to “mediate” between the two parties.

- **‘Justice Rally’ marks new beginning, Turkey’s main opposition leader says**¹⁰⁴
Main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu has said the 25-day “justice march,” which was completed with a massive rally on Istanbul’s Asian side on July 9, marks a “new beginning” for the country. “Everyone should know this very well. July 9 is a new step. It’s a new climate, a new history, a new birth,” Kılıçdaroğlu said during the “Justice Rally” in Istanbul’s Maltepe district, which brought together hundreds of thousands of people.

The CHP, under the leadership of Kılıçdaroğlu, launched its march from Ankara on June 15 after its Istanbul deputy Enis Berberoğlu was sentenced to 25 years in prison on June 14 on charges of providing daily Cumhuriyet with video footage purporting to show weapons-loaded National Intelligence Agency (MİT) trucks heading to Syria.

The march was initially planned to end in front of Maltepe Prison, where Berberoğlu is held, but the party decided to hold a large rally instead.

During his speech, Kılıçdaroğlu said they had carried out “the most peaceful political act in history.” “We walked for nonexistent justice. We walked for the rights of victims, jailed lawmakers and journalists.

The CHP leader read out a 10-item list of demands, vowing to continue struggling until these demands are met. These demands included revealing the “political leg of the thwarted coup, giving back parliament its authority, lifting the state of emergency, putting an end to the ‘civil death’ of state of emergency victims, securing judicial independence, releasing jailed lawmakers and journalists, reestablishing a strong parliamentary democracy, ending poverty and unemployment, and a pursuing a peaceful, fair foreign policy.

In addition to the CHP, the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) and many labor unions, including the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DİSK) and the Confederation of Public Sector Trade Unions (KESK), attended the rally.

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/justice-rally-marks-new-beginning-turkeys-main-opposition-leader-says-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=115302&NewsCatID=339>

- **US Secretary of State Tillerson to visit Turkey amid Syria rift¹⁰⁵**

Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson will soon travel to Turkey to meet senior officials and discuss a range of bilateral and regional issues, the State Department said on July 5. Senior State Department officials said Tillerson will first visit Ukraine before heading to Turkey on July 9-10 to attend the World Petroleum Congress, where he will receive the organization's highest honor and deliver remarks on the importance of energy security as a national security and regional priority for the U.S. and its partners.

Tillerson will also meet senior Turkish officials and underscore the importance of Turkey's partnership in fighting the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Ankara's key role as a NATO ally and maintaining close ties to Turkey on a range of economic and other issues, the State Department said.

An official at the State Department told Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency that he expects Ankara's security concerns to come up during the visit.

- **President Erdoğan, Trump hold surprise meeting at G-20¹⁰⁶**

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and U.S. President Donald Trump held an unscheduled meeting on July 8 as a part of the G-20 summit in Hamburg. The two leaders held a nearly half hour meeting before the closing session of the G20 summit, Turkish officials have said without giving more details. Erdoğan also had a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on July 8 morning; the two leaders discussed the conflict in Syria and other regional issues.

The two-day summit of world's 20 major economies (G20) will end later on July 8. President Erdoğan is expected to hold a news conference at the end of the summit. The summit hosted by Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel had focused on global economy, climate change and the fight against terrorism.

Cyber Security

- **Next cyber-attack could cost insurers \$2.5 billion¹⁰⁷**

Cybercrime insurers largely avoided costly claims from the recent attacks that hit businesses around the globe. The next global virus could change that. "It's exceptionally likely that we will see an event over the next months that will seriously affect insurers," Graeme Newman, chief innovation officer at CFC Underwriting, said in an interview.

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/us-secretary-of-state-tillerson-to-visit-turkey-amid-syria-rift.aspx?pageID=238&nID=115173&NewsCatID=358>

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/president-erdogan-trump-hold-surprise-meeting-at-g-20.aspx?pageID=238&nID=115270&NewsCatID=510>

¹⁰⁷ <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/next-cyber-attack-could-cost-insurers-2-5-billion/articleshow/59496553.cms>

“It would only need a combination of WannaCry’s wide reach and Petya’s destructive force to cost cyber insurers something like \$2.5 billion, or a full year of gross premium income in the market.” Hackers may learn to develop even more dangerous tools after attacks such as the WannaCry virus in May and the Petya attack that wreaked havoc in Europe in June by freezing access to computers, allowing the attackers to demand ransom to unlock the systems. Those events didn’t result in meaningful insurance claims because they didn’t affect many companies in the US, where currently more than 90% of the cyber insurance market is located, Newman said.

Terrorism and Counter Terrorism

Pakistan

S. No.	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	July 8	Panjgur / Balochistan	Iranian border guards fired three mortar shells into Pakistani territory near the Panjgur District border. However, no casualties were reported. ¹⁰⁸	Cross-border shelling	
2	July 7	Quetta / Balochistan	At least 98 suspects were arrested when Security Forces launched a crackdown in Quetta and adjoining areas, following the target-killing spree in the Province. No outfit had claimed responsibility for the killings. ¹⁰⁹	arrest	
3	July 7	Turbat / Balochistan	At least three terrorists were killed in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted by Frontier Corps (FC) personnel in Turbat District. ¹¹⁰	3	0
4	July 6	Quetta / Balochistan	Two persons, including Aymal Khan Kakar, the son of Pashto poet Dr Syal Khan Kakar and his	2	0

¹⁰⁸ Syed Ali Shah, Mortar shells fired into Pakistani territory by Iranian border forces, *Dawn*, July 8, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1344023/mortar-shells-fired-into-pakistani-territory-by-iranian-border-forces>, accessed on July 1, 2017

¹⁰⁹ Syed Ali Shah, 98 suspects arrested in Quetta after killing spree claims 5 lives, *Dawn*, July 7, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1343827/98-suspects-arrested-in-quetta-after-killing-sprees-claims-5-lives>, accessed on July 10, 2017

¹¹⁰ Zafar Baloch, FC foils terror bid in Turbat, *The Express Tribune*, July 7, 2017, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1452335/fc-foils-terror-bid-turbat/>, accessed on July 10, 2017

			watchman, were killed when unidentified militants opened fire at them in Chashma Achuzai area of Quetta. ¹¹¹		
5	July 6	Quetta / Balochistan	Balochistan National Party (BNP) leader Malik Naveed Dehwar and his guard were killed while another man, identified as Haji Essa, was injured when unidentified militants opened fire at his vehicle in Arbab Karam Khan Road area in provincial capital Quetta. ¹¹²	2	1
6	July 6	Panjgur / Balochistan	Unidentified armed assailants attacked the convoy of Balochistan Health Minister Rehmat Saleh Baloch in Panjgur town of Panjgur District while he was travelling to Prom area. Levies sources said the militants used various weapons, including rockets in the attack. However, no casualties were reported. ¹¹³	0	0

Afghanistan

S.No.	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	July 9	Nangarhar	A local tribal elder, Malik Abdul Rauf, was killed while four others sustained injuries in an explosion in Pekha District of Nangarhar	1	4

¹¹¹ Pashto poet's son killed in Quetta, *The Express Tribune*, July 7, 2017, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1452409/pashto-poets-son-killed-quetta/>, accessed on July 10, 2017

¹¹² Syed Ali Shah, BNP leader Malik Naveed Dehwar killed in Quetta gun attack, *Dawn*, July 6, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1343604/bnp-leader-malik-naveed-dehwar-killed-in-quetta-gun-attack>, accessed on July 10, 2017

¹¹³ Syed Ali Shah, Balochistan health minister survives rocket attack in Panjgur, *Dawn*, July 6, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1343590/balochistan-health-minister-survives-rocket-attack-in-panjgur>, accessed on July 10, 2017

			Province. The explosive was planted in Rauf's vehicle. ¹¹⁴		
2	July 9	Samangan	A public relations official of the High Peace Council (HPC) committee for central Samangan Province, identified as Niamatullah Niamati, was killed by Taliban militants. Niamati was a former jihadi 'commander' of the Jama'at-e-Islami (JIA). He was abducted while offering morning's prayer at the village mosque in Baba Qanbar village of Khuram Sarbagh District. ¹¹⁵	1	0
3	July 9	Kabul	President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani while speaking during a conference in Kabul called on the Taliban to join peace process, warning that the group will be designated as global terrorists if its pursues violence. He said the Taliban group should understand that time is not waiting for them. "They should wholeheartedly accept the peace process or they should get ready to be included in the international list of the globally designated terrorists," President Ghani warned. ¹¹⁶	Statement	
4	July 8	Paktia	At least seven militants were killed in a US drone strike in the	7	0

¹¹⁴ Tribal Elder among 5 Killed or Wounded in Nangarhar Explosion, *Outlook Afghanistan*, July 9, 2017, <http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/assets/epaper/July%202009,%202017/Main%20Page.pdf>, p. 2, accessed on July 10, 2017

¹¹⁵ Samangan's Peace Committee Public Relations Official Killed, *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, <http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/assets/epaper/July%202010,%202017/Main%20Page.pdf>, p. 2, accessed on July 10, 2017

¹¹⁶ Taliban to be designated as global terrorists if pursues violence: Ghani, *Khaama Press*, July 9, 2017, <http://www.khaama.com/taliban-to-be-designated-as-global-terrorists-if-pursues-violence-ghani-03110>, accessed on July 10, 2017

			vicinity of Zurmat District of Paktia province. ¹¹⁷		
5	July 8	Jawzjan	At least five ISIS militants were killed in an airstrike targeting the leaders of the outfit in the vicinity of Qosh Tapa District of Jawzjan Province. ¹¹⁸	5	0
6	July 6	Faryab	At least 16 members of a local uprising group, led by Gul Ahmad, joined the Taliban in Qazel Qeshlaq village of Khwaja Sabzposh District in Faryab Province. ¹¹⁹	Locals Taliban	join

Iraq

S.No.	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	July 9	Mosul	<p>Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi visited Mosul to congratulate the army for driving ISIS out of the most of the city. "I've come to Mosul today to follow up on our victories and on the eradication of ISIL, which we are close to achieving," Abadi said.</p> <p>The PM later indicated he would only declare victory once final pockets of resistance were cleared. "Most ISIL fighters in Mosul have been killed and just a few are left now, he said. I will leave some room for the heroic armed forces to complete this action so we can</p>	Liberated Mosul areas	

¹¹⁷ Drone strike leaves 7 militants dead in Paktia province, *Khaama Press*, July 9, 2017, <http://www.khaama.com/drone-strike-leaves-7-militants-dead-in-paktia-province-03112>, accessed on July 10, 2017

¹¹⁸ Deadly airstrike target ISIS leaders in Jawzjan in North of Afghanistan, *Khaama Press*, July 9, 2017, <http://www.khaama.com/dead-airstrike-target-isis-leaders-in-jawzjan-in-north-of-afghanistan-03111>, accessed on July 10, 2017

¹¹⁹ 16 Members of Faryab Uprising Group Join Taliban, *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, July 6, 2017, <http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/assets/epaper/July%2006,%202017/Main%20Page.pdf>, p. 2, accessed on July 10, 2017

			announce victory soon, God willing.” ¹²⁰	
2	July 8	Mosul	<p>Islamic State militants pledged to fight to death as Iraqi troops besiege them in the last few meters they are holding in western Mosul near the Tigris River.</p> <p>According to Islamic State’s Amaq News Agency, ISIS would fight till “martyrdom” in Midan, a District near the western bank of Tigris River which bisects Mosul. The declaration came as commanders from the Iraqi and US-led coalition commanders said less than 250 meters remained under the group’s control in western Mosul.¹²¹</p>	IS pledges to fight to death
3	July 7	Sulaymaniyah	An imam of al-Rahman mosque, identified as al-Sheikh Ahmed Deiri, was killed by unidentified militants while he was leaving the mosque in Qal’et Duza District, north of Sulaymaniyah of Iraqi Kurdistan. ¹²²	1 o
4	July 7	Mosul	<p>Islamic State has cancelled the Friday prayers at all mosques in Tal Afar town, west of Mosul city and pledged posting an audio recording for the group’s leader to show he is still alive.</p> <p>According to an unnamed local source from Nineveh Province, “IS</p>	IS cancels Friday prayers

¹²⁰ Abadi hails 'great victory' against ISIL in Mosul, *Al Jazeera*, July 10, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/07/iraq-abadi-mosul-victory-170709122533584.html>, accessed on July 10, 2017

¹²¹ Mohamed Mostafa, Islamic State vows to fight to death as Iraqis prepare to declare Mosul free, *Iraqi News*, July 8, 2017, <http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/islamic-state-vows-fight-death-iraqis-prepare-declare-mosul-free/>, accessed on July 10, 2017

¹²² Nehal Mostafa, Gunmen kills imam of mosque in Sulaymaniyah, *Iraqi News*, July 7, 2017, <http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/gunmen-kills-imam-mosque-sulaymaniyah/>, accessed on July 10, 2017

			<p>militants have banned the Friday prayers at all of Tal Afar mosques after a curfew was imposed in the wake of heavy shelling against procession of a prominent Arab leader there,” adding, “IS distributed brief statement vowing to post a new audio recording for its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi to show he is still alive.”¹²³</p>	
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Syria

S.No.	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	July 9	Homs	The Syrian Government forces killed more than 40 Islamic State militants during clashes near Maksi al-Husan Village, east of Homs. ¹²⁴	40	NS
2	July 9	Idlib	Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham carried out an extensive security operation in Idlib, in order to capture the Islamic State cells and members, arresting dozens of them, including the IS 'security official' Abu Soliman al-Russi, after attacking their headquarters and meeting points in the city. ¹²⁵	capture	
3	July 9	Idlib	An unspecified number of people were killed when a car bomb hit Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS) checkpoint in downtown Maarat Al-Numan, a strategic town on Idlib's M5-highway. Free Syrian	NS	NS

¹²³ Nehal Mostafa, IS bans Friday prayers in Tal Afar, pledges posting audio recording by Baghdadi, *Iraqi News*, July 7, 2017, <http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/bans-friday-prayers-tal-afar-pledges-posting-audio-recording-baghdadi/>, accessed on July 10, 2017

¹²⁴ Loaa Adel, Syrian forces kill 40 IS members east of Homs, *Iraqi News*, July 9, 2017, <http://www.iraqinews.com/arab-world-news/syrian-forces-kill-40-members-east-homs/>, accessed on July 10, 2017

¹²⁵ Loaa Adel, Tahrir al-Sham captures IS security official in Idlib, *Iraqi News*, July 9, 2017, <http://www.iraqinews.com/arab-world-news/tahrir-al-sham-captures-security-official-idlib/>, accessed on July 10, 2017

			Army's (FSA) 'Division 13' role in suspected in the attack. ¹²⁶		
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International Economic Issues

- **IMF cuts US economic growth look**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on June 27, 2017, cut its growth forecasts for the US economy to 2.1% in 2017 and 2018, dropping its assumption that the Trump administration's tax cut and fiscal spending plans would boost growth. In a statement following a review of US economic policies, the IMF said that the Trump administration's push for annual growth of over 3% for a sustained period was unlikely to be achieved partly because the labour market is already at a level consistent with full employment. The IMF held that the Trump administration's latest budget plans would place a disproportionate share of spending cuts on to low and middle income households, countering the budget's goals of promoting safety and prosperity for all Americans. Instead, the fund suggested a tax policy that would improve the federal revenue-to-GDP ratio, more balanced cuts that would strengthen the social safety net efficiency, and efforts to contain healthcare cost inflation.¹²⁷

- **Sturgen rules out new independence vote till after Brexit**

On June 27, 2017, Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgen announced the postponement of her plans to introduce legislation for a second independence referendum until the terms of Brexit from the European Union are clear. Sturgen party, Scottish National Party, lost 21 of its 56 seats in the parliament election held on June 8. Following the elections, Ms. Sturgen acknowledged that her insistence on a second referendum has lost the SNP votes.¹²⁸

- **IMF to participate for 'last time' in Greek bailout: Schaeuble**

On July 1, 2017, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a key creditor in Greece's bailout, announced that the bank will not participate in any further rescues of the debt—wrecked country. In this direction, German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble said, "We have all acknowledged (eurozone and IMF) that the third Greek (bailout) payment will be the last with the participation of the IMF". The German finance chief has been inflexible on the issue of Greek debt relief, in opposition to the IMF which says that Greece needs debt

¹²⁶ Chris Tomson, Car bomb strikes Al-Qaeda militants at rebel stronghold in southern Idlib, *Al Masdar News*, July 9, 2017, <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/car-bomb-strikes-al-qaeda-militants-rebel-stronghold-southern-idlib/>, accessed on July 10, 2017

¹²⁷ "IMF cuts forecast for US growth in blow to Trump tax plan", *Reuters*, June 28, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jun/27/trump-tax-plan-us-economy-imf-forecast> (accessed on June 28, 2017)

¹²⁸ Elisabeth O'Leary, "Sturgen rules out new independence vote till after Brexit", *The Indian Express*, June 28, 2017.

relief to inject new life into its floundering economy. After participating in two previous international loans to save Greece from bankruptcy, the IMF is still set to take part in a third bailout. But for the moment, it has held back its contribution over the issue of whether the eurozone will decide to ease Greek debt — currently at 180 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).¹²⁹

¹²⁹“IMF to participate for ‘last time’ in Greek bailout: Schaeuble”, *Hindu Bussinesline*, July 1, 2017, <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/world/imf-to-participate-for-last-time-in-greek-bailout-schaeuble/article9744926.ece> (accessed on July 3, 2017)