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# **BORIS JOHNSON AND THE QUEEN SIGN THE BREXIT WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT**

**ASWATHY K.**

**1957354**



Boris Johnson signed the Brexit withdrawal agreement after the British Parliament gave its approval last week. The Queen gave her assent the next day.

Thus Brexit has become law now. Brexit has been looming over Europe for the last four years. The conclusion of the drawn-out deal is finally reaching its conclusion. Johnson who had been elected last month on the platform of getting Brexit done is fulfilling his promise.

The British Parliament had scrutinised the Brexit bill and rejected five amendments. They rejected the provisions to unite refugee children with their parents in the UK.

Along with it the permission to allow the continuous residence to the EU citizens already in the UK.

Of course the ever traditionalist British are following a lot of protocol for the passage of this historic deal. For e.g. - The Prime Minister used a Parker fountain pen, as is custom for ceremonial signings in No 10, Downing Street.

Brexit will be declared on 31st January, 2020 as it was announced by Johnson last month. European leaders had earlier signed on this agreement and the European Parliament will deliberate on the same this upcoming week. Nobody expects any opposition.

# CRITICISM ON THE CURRENT ECONOMY STATISTICS

**VAISHNAVI I.  
1957353**



Simon Bridges accuses the government of screwing up the economy.

National Leader Simon Bridges is accusing the Government of "screwing up the economy," after new Treasury figures revealed the books would be going into deficit next year.

He is also critical of the Government's economic management, after new GDP numbers showed the economy is growing slower than has been expected.

At the Half Yearly Economic and Fiscal Update (HYEFU) this morning, Treasury revealed next year there will be \$900 million deficit – down from an expected \$1.3 billion surplus.

As a result of this happening, Government borrowings have exceeded however the returns on investment are likely to be more than their debts.





# **MIGRANT SURGE INTO GUATEMALA REACHES 3,500; HEADS FOR MEXICO**

**SANJANA B.S**

**1957343**



More than 3,500 Central Americans had poured into Guatemala by Friday in U.S.-bound gatherings known as caravans, officials said, posing a headache for the leaders of Guatemala and Mexico amid fierce U.S. pressure to curb migration.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly urged the region to prevent such groups of migrants reaching Mexico's border with the United States, and the latest exodus from Honduras that began on Wednesday has been accompanied by U.S. border agents.

The migrants, some travelling in groups as small as a dozen people while others formed caravans of more than 100, said they planned to unite at the Guatemalan border city of Tecun Uman before crossing together into Ciudad Hidalgo, Mexico.

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said his government was monitoring the situation as the migrants approached, saying there were 4,000 jobs available on the southern border, as well as shelters and medical help.

"We are keeping an eye on everything," Lopez Obrador said during a regular press conference.

Lopez Obrador did not say if Mexico would seek to keep the migrants in the southern part of the country. Most Central Americans who leave their countries escaping poverty and violence are eager to make their way towards the United States.

Under U.S. pressure, Mexican security forces have increasingly broken up large groups as they head north.

# CHINA'S EXPANSION OF THEIR SOCIALIST SYSTEMS

**AKSHATH K.**

**1957301**



As President Xi Jinping said at the Second China International Import Expo, based on historical perspective, China's development is a great cause of human progress. China's successful experience shows that all roads lead to Rome, and there are more than one successful development model.

China will continue to adhere to the independent foreign policy of peace, develop friendly cooperation with all countries based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, continue to deepen reform, expand opening up, and promote the establishment of a new type of international relations and a community of shared destiny for mankind.

We are willing to share the experience of governance with all developing countries including Tonga, and we will earnestly respect and firmly support all countries in pursuing their own development path.

The Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee made significant decisions to uphold and improve the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, as well as to modernize the national governance system and governance capabilities.

It has set the overall goal which is, by the time the Chinese Communist Party celebrates its 100 anniversary (2021), remarkable results should be made to make the systems in all areas more mature and better defined.



# US AND THE AFGHAN TALIBAN NEARING A HISTORIC PEACE DEAL AFTER MONTHS OF ON-OFF TALKS

**NEETHU SAJI**

**1957334**



Afghanistan had been in a state of almost constant war for 20 years even before the US invaded.

In 1979, a year after a coup, the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan to support its communist government. It fought a resistance movement known as the “mujahedeen” supported by the US, Pakistan, China and Saudi Arabia, among other countries.

In 1989, Soviet troops withdrew but the civil war continued. In the chaos that followed, the Taliban sprang up.

In 1994 they first rose to prominence in the border area of northern Pakistan and south-west Afghanistan .

They promised to fight corruption and improve security and, at that time, many Afghans were tired of the excesses and infighting of the mujahedeen during the civil war.

The US is still conducting air strikes against the Taliban. However Donald Trump is keen to reduce troop numbers before he faces another election in November 2020.

The Taliban now control much more territory than they did when international troops left Afghanistan in 2014. Many in Washington and elsewhere fear that a full US troop pull-out would leave a vacuum that could be filled by militant groups seeking to plot attacks in the West.

# **BOLIVIA'S INTERIM GOVERNMENT MAKES DRASTIC CHANGES TO FOREIGN POLICY**

**SUMEDHA K.**

**1957347**



After the overthrow of former President Evo Morales in October 2019, opposition member Jeanine Anez stepped up to lead the interim government in Bolivia.

The interim government, which is formed mainly to facilitate new general elections, has taken it upon itself to bring changes to the country's status-quo in various departments including the foreign policy of Bolivia.

The interim government has suspended its diplomatic relations with the communist-ruled Cuba, followed by cutting off ties with another communist-ruled country-

Venezuela, which is presently going through a political and economic crisis. Previously under Morales, who belongs to a Socialist party, Bolivia had good relations with both Cuba and Venezuela.

However, the interim government has made it clear that it does not want to have anything to do with communist or socialist regimes, especially in Latin America.

This move follows the interim government's intentions to come closer to the United States. In line with this policy, the country has also appointed its first ambassador of a temporary and special mission to the U.S.

This is the first such envoy since 2008 when diplomatic relations with the U.S. began to sour under Morales.

All these changes can be seen as a way of asserting the strong opposition felt against former President Evo Morales. However, what holds next for Bolivia needs to be seen after the general elections that are to be held in May this year.



## 98 LAWSUITS REPRESENTING THE SOCIAL WORLD

**MEDHA B.**

**1957354**



Social Unit presented a broad statement with 98 lawsuits representing the social world

The more than 200 social organizations that make up Social Unit held a press conference this Friday in front of the former National Congress, in which they presented an extensive list of demands, which has 98 lawsuits in 16 topics: Human Rights; Job; Social Security; Basic services; Education; Health, Housing and City; Environment; Original towns; Migration and Shelter; Disability; Women; Girls, boys, children and adolescents; Culture, Arts and Heritage; Medicinal Cannabis and Sexual Diversity / LGTBIQ +

In the conference, the organizations mentioned "the social and political crisis that Chile is going through has among its main

causes the abuse and inequality that includes all the

areas of precariousness of life and that over the years it has not been able to respond by democratic restrictions of our institutionality “.

Even pointed out that "we believe it is necessary to advance in structural changes of how political, economic and symbolic power is redistributed and to elaborate a new framework of functioning as a society through a new constitution via a Plurinational and Joint Constituent Assembly"

It basically implies that there must be a guarantee of transformation through a Social Agenda that, in a short and medium term, can substantially change the central problems that afflict people living in Chile.

# MARSHALL ISLANDS BANS DIRECT TRAVEL FROM CHINA

**URMILA N.**

**1957352**



Amidst of mounting global concern about a coronavirus that officials in China say has caused the deaths 15 more people, the Marshall Islands issued a travel advisory Friday night banning travelers coming directly from the People's Republic of China.

"Any traveler with travel originating from or transiting through the PRC must spend at least 14 days in a country not affected by 2019-nCoV said the travel restriction issued Friday by Marshall Islands Health Secretary Jack Niedenthal.

In the event of a traveler arrives in the Marshall Islands within the 14 day period, entry will be denied. People sickened by the virus that originated in Wuhan, China have been identified in Taiwan, Thailand, Japan, S Korea.

More than 1200 people are confirmed to have contracted the virus in China with the death toll already over 40. Hundreds have been admitted to hospital and the Chinese government has taken unprecedented action to shut down travel from Wuhan and other cities in an effort to halt the spread of the virus.

The Marshall Islands has since then been in a state of health emergency, fighting an ongoing dengue fever outbreak that has mounted to over 2,100 cases as of earlier this week. It suffered an influenza outbreak in November and December that resulted in hundreds of islanders being hospitalized.



# THE ECONOMICS OF ENERGY IN EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

**ANEETTA T.**

**1957337**



In 2003, Egypt began exporting gas to Jordan via the Arab Gas Pipeline, which later extended to Israel, but supply ceased with insurgents attacks on the pipeline.

Israel's discovery of large reserves in the offshore fields of Leviathan and Tamar, changed the rules of the game for Israel, whereby it utilizes its neighbor's infrastructure in securing a role in the gas sector, through joint co-operation in the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF).

Meanwhile, Egypt, has called upon Palestine and Israel to carefully consider a peace plan announced by U.S. President Donald Trump, with a resume negotiations.

Egypt is trying to position itself as an energy hub in the Eastern Mediterranean, by harnessing its infrastructural

capabilities to Europe and Asia.

In the Energy Regulation Efficiency Index, Egypt ranked 32nd globally in 2019. The call for de-escalation of crisis by Egypt to Israel can be seen as a gateway towards solving unemployment in the country.

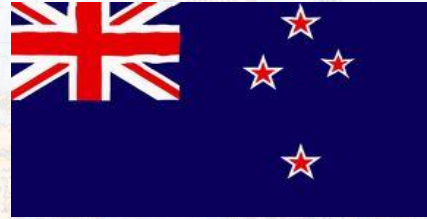
A country as large as Egypt cannot afford quick-win scenarios as it enters a cycle of stability and adaptation due to economic reforms implemented in 2017.

Egypt being placed 82nd among 141 countries in the Global Competitiveness Indicators 2019, indicates its interests in solving its neighbor's conflict with Palestine to monetize its endeavours on a global scale as Palestine is also a member of the EMGF.

# COUNTRIES



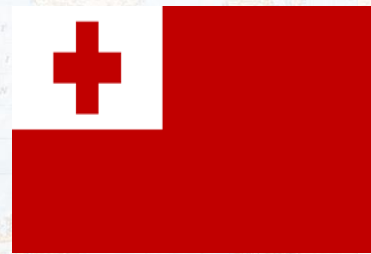
BRITAIN- ASWATHY



NEW ZEALAND -  
VAISHNAVI



AFGHANISTAN -  
NEETHU



TONGA- AKSHATH



EGYPT – ANEETTA



BOLIVIA - SUMEDHA



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