



# Troop cuts highlight China's shifting power

China's unveiling of "carrier-killer" missiles and cuts in troop numbers yesterday underlined its shift towards naval strength amid growing Pacific rivalry with the US, analysts said. More than a dozen anti-ship ballistic missiles capable of travelling at 10 times the speed of sound were shown at a massive military parade in Beijing, with state television calling them a "trump card" in potential conflicts and "one of China's key weapons in asymmetric warfare".

For a fraction of the cost of an aircraft carrier the missile threatens to alter the balance of power in the Pacific. The land-based DF-21D intermediate-range missile is said to be equipped with onboard terminal guidance systems that give it the unprecedented ability to attack a moving target, such as a carrier group at sea. For decades, the United States' fleet of aircraft carriers has been a key component of its ability to project power around the world, and Andrew Erickson of the Washington-based Jamestown Foundation has described the DF-21D as a "Frankenweapon" that is "potentially unpredictable and disruptive".

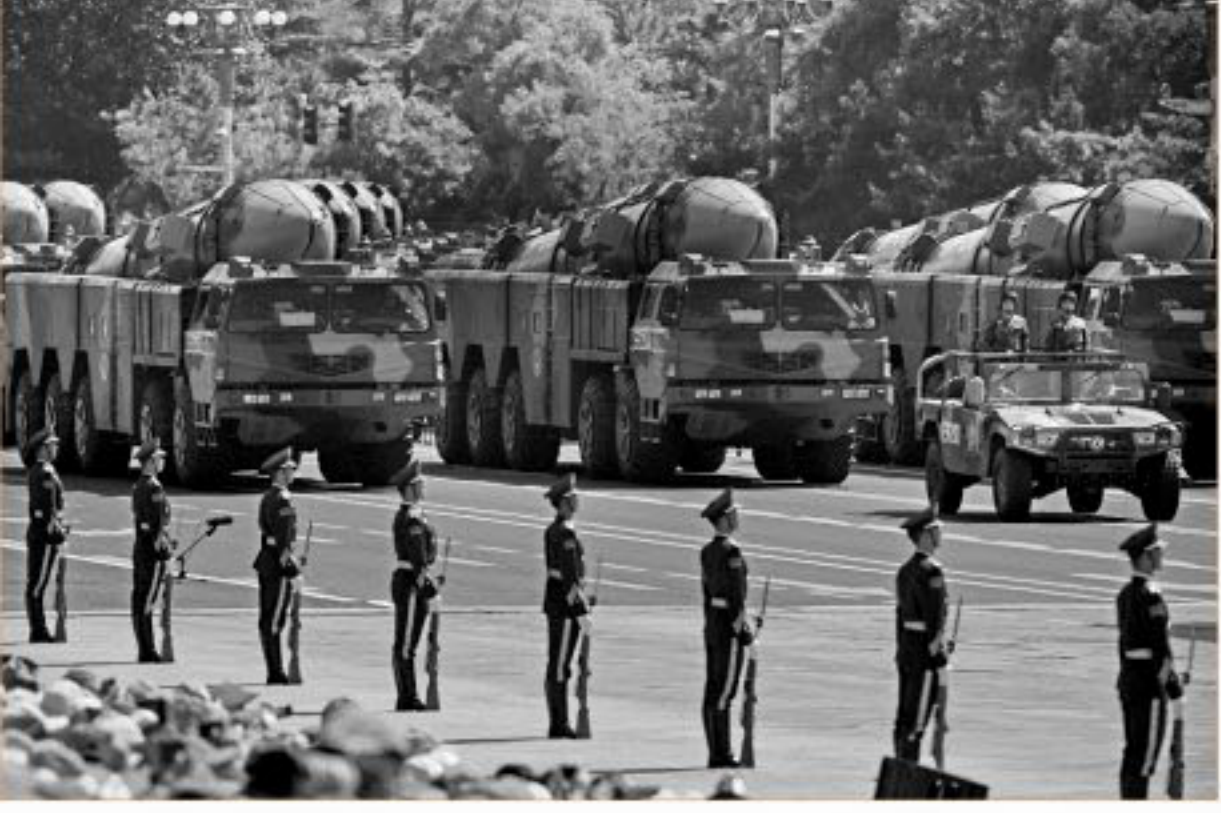
## CHINA'S MILITARY HARDWARE

<b>ARMY PERSONNEL</b> 1,600,000
Main battle Tanks 6,540
Armoured personnel carriers 5,020
Helicopters 839
Artillery 13,178
<b>NAVY PERSONNEL</b> 235,000
Submarines 70
Principal combat vessels 71
Patrol and coastal combatants 223
Mine sweepers and layers 53
Landing crafts 238
Logistics and support ships 211
Aircrafts 332
Helicopters 103
Aircraft carrier 1
<b>AIR FORCE PERSONNEL</b> 398,000
Combat aircrafts 2,239
Helicopters 50

SOURCE: IISS THE MILITARY BALANCE 2014

Chinese People's Liberation Army personnel participate in a military parade at Tiananmen Square in Beijing yesterday to mark the 70th anniversary of victory over Japan and the end of World War II. Speaking on the Tiananmen Rostrum, Chinese President Xi Jinping said "total victory" over Japan "restored China's status as a major country in the world".

PHOTO: AFP



## NEWS IN brief

### Double suicide attack kills 30 in Cameroon

At least 30 people were killed in two suicide bombings in northern Cameroon yesterday, the latest violence to hit the area since dozens died in attacks in July blamed on the Boko Haram Islamist group. The attacks were launched three days after Boko Haram gunmen on horseback killed dozens of people in a village across the border in northeast Nigeria's Borno state.

### 19 die as overloaded canoe capsizes in Mali

Nineteen people died when an overloaded canoe capsized in Mali, local authorities said yesterday, in the second major river accident in the poor west African nation in four months. The vessel overturned Wednesday on a stretch of the Niger river passing through the town of Bangou, around 140 kilometres from the central city of Mopti, officials told AFP.

### Saudi carries out 130th execution this year

Saudi authorities put to death a convicted murderer yesterday, bringing to 130 the number of executions in the kingdom so far this year, according to an AFP tally. Saudi citizen Mashari al-Shammari was found guilty of killing fellow tribesman Sufouq al-Shammari in a frenzied attack with a gun, a dagger and a stick, the interior ministry said in a statement carried by the official SPA news agency.

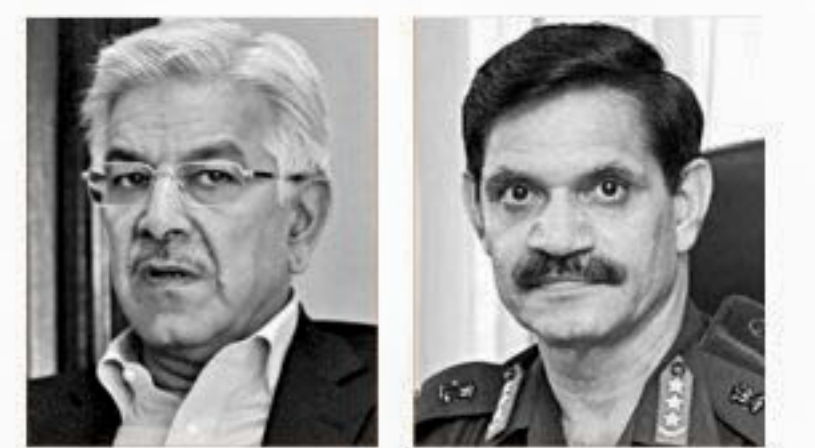
### Four Turkish police killed in PKK bombing

Four Turkish police were killed yesterday in a bomb attack on their vehicle in the country's southeast blamed on the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), sources told AFP. The attack is latest deadly strike on the security forces blamed on the PKK since the Turkish government launched a major "anti-terrorist" campaign against the Kurdish militants in July.

# Pakistan ready for short or long war: defence minister

Pakistan is ready for a short or long conflict and will inflict heavy losses on India in case "war hysteria" overcomes Indian leadership, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has said. His remarks came in reaction to the statement by Army Chief Gen Dalbir Singh that India is prepared for "swift and short" wars in the future. Participating in a Radio Pakistan programme, Asif said Pakistan believes in peace but knows how to respond to any aggression. "We want peace but will inflict heavy losses on India if war hysteria overcame its leadership," he said. Commenting on Indian Army Chief's remarks, he said, "Pakistan is fully prepared to give a befitting response if India imposed short or prolonged war."

Talking about previous wars, he said Pakistan armed forces "foiled designs" of Indian forces in 1965. "Our forces crushed the Indian dreams of occupying Lahore back in 1965 and will do the same in future," he said. The Defence Minister also said Pakistan Army was now more experienced and professional than 50 years ago. "Our forces are engaged in the war against terror for several years and they know how to respond to any challenge," he said. Asif, however, said Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif believes in peace. The remarks come against the backdrop of heightened tensions and cross-border firing between Indian and Pakistani troops along the LoC recently. The Pakistan Minister on Sunday has also cautioned India that it will suffer "heavy losses" if it tries to "impose" a war on his country. India and Pakistan have been embroiled in a war of words over ceasefire violations; and tensions between two sides escalated after the Gurdaspur and Udhampur terror attacks, which New Delhi asserts were carried out by Pakistani nationals.



Khawaja Asif Gen Dalbir Singh

# First Tamil in 32 yrs to lead Lanka opposition

A Tamil lawmaker became leader of the opposition in Sri Lanka's parliament for the first time in 32 years yesterday, in the latest sign of progress towards ethnic reconciliation on the once bitterly divided island. Rajavarthiam Sampanthan is the first lawmaker from the ethnic minority to lead the opposition since 1983, when Tamil legislators resigned en masse to protest against a statute that compelled them to denounce separatism. The 82-year-old moderate heads the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), which emerged from last month's election as the third-largest force with 16 seats in the 225-member assembly. "We shall be loyal to this country and the people of this country," Sampanthan told the House yesterday. "Our primary duty is to ensure that there is an acceptable resolution to the Tamil question."

Sri Lankans voted overwhelmingly in last month's polls to continue what Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe called the "January 8 revolution" in reference to the toppling of long-time leader Mahinda Rajapakse. Wickremesinghe's new government has pledged to work for unity in Sri Lanka, which still bears the scars of the decades-long civil war between separatist Tamil guerrillas and the state. His United National Party (UNP) will govern in coalition with the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA), which was in opposition until the latest election. But a splinter group has remained loyal to the UPFA's best-known member Rajapakse, who oversaw the crushing of the Tamil Tiger guerrillas that ended the war in 2009, and chosen to remain in opposition. They opposed Sampanthan's appointment, arguing they should lead the opposition, but House Speaker Karu Jayasuriya rejected that and named the veteran Tamil legislator.



R Sampanthan

# 2G SCAM A Raja misled ex-PM Manmohan Singh

The CBI yesterday charged former telecom minister A Raja with misleading then Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh on the issue of allocation of 2G spectrum licences and having a "habit" of making false statements. Advancing final arguments in the 2G spectrum allocation scam case before the special court, special public prosecutor Anand Grover said that Raja had "deliberately" told incorrect facts to the then prime minister on policy issues and had deviated from prescribed procedures. "The Prime Minister, in his letter to Raja, had asked him to ensure fairness and transparency (in allocation of licence) and also to inform him before taking any decision. Raja wrote a letter to the Prime Minister and told him about the process. What he told the PM was contrary to the records... Raja made incorrect statements in the letter written to the PM. This was deliberate on Raja's part as he knew very well that what he is saying to the PM was incorrect," Grover told Special Judge O P Saini. He further claimed that "Raja is in a habit of making false statements, even to the Prime Minister" and "with a stroke on pen" had changed the cut-off date for receiving applications from firms seeking 2G licences, in which out of 575 applicant companies, 408 applications were kept out of the race. "Cut-off date for receiving applications was changed from October 10, 2007 to October 1, 2007 and then to October 1, 2007. Upto September 24, 2007, 167 applications were received in the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and upto October 1, 2007, a total of 575 applications were received. "So, virtually 408 applications were struck off by the stroke of a pen by Raja," Grover claimed, adding that the decision to change the cut-off date was taken by Raja to favour some firms. Raja, who has denied all charges during his arguments, and 16 others, including DMK MP Kanimozhi, are facing trial in the case.



A Raja Manmohan Singh

# UN urges talks after Nepal violence

The United Nations called yesterday for dialogue and an end to violence in Nepal following clashes between security forces and protesters opposed to a proposed new constitution that have left 19 people dead. UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was "concerned about reports of violence in recent weeks and saddened by the loss of life". "He urges all to refrain from the use of force, denounce violence in all forms and engage in dialogue," Dujarric said in a statement. Anger has been building for weeks in southern Nepal after lawmakers struck a breakthrough deal on a new constitution, spurred by April's devastating earthquake. In the latest bout of violence, police this week shot dead six protesters in separate incidents in the country's south, home to the Madhesi ethnic minority that opposes the new charter. The constitution was meant to cement peace after a 10-year insurgency led by former Maoist rebels and to draw a line under centuries of inequality. But proposals to divide the Himalayan nation into seven provinces have sparked fury among historically marginalised communities including the Madhesis.

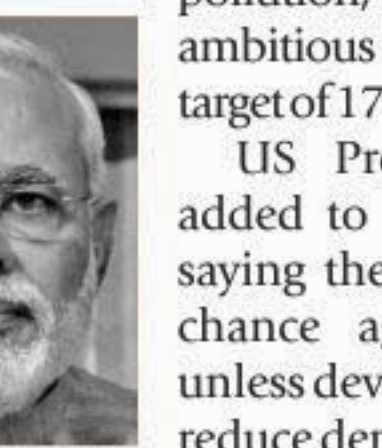


A placard reading "A farmer commits suicide every two days in France" is pictured on a tractor as convoys of tractors run through the streets of Paris yesterday, as farmers tried to clog up the capital's roads in protest at falling food prices.

PHOTO: AFP

# Modi urges 'climate justice'

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday called for a focus on "climate justice" rather than climate change, saying the poor suffered most from global warming. India is under pressure to commit to cutting its carbon emissions ahead of a major conference in Paris later this year aimed at forging a global climate pact. It argues the burden should lie with industrialised countries, which have been accused of hypocrisy in heaping demands on poorer nations. In a speech in New Delhi yesterday, Modi said natural disasters such as flooding or drought disproportionately affected poor communities and called for a shift in focus. "We can't let climate change keep affecting people in this manner. Which is why I believe the discourse must shift focus from climate change to climate justice," he said. India has so far resisted pressure to commit to any major emissions cuts despite a pact last year between the two top global emitters, China and the United States. Modi has bet big on coal, a key source of pollution, although India also has an ambitious renewable energy output target of 175,000 megawatts by 2022. US President Barack Obama added to the pressure in January, saying the world did not "stand a chance against climate change" unless developing nations like India reduce dependence on fossil fuels. "I know the argument made by some, that it's unfair for countries like the United States to ask developing nations and emerging economies like India to reduce your dependence on the same fossil fuels that helped power our growth for more than a century," Obama said in New Delhi.



Modi

# No proof Arafat was poisoned

French judges investigating claims that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was murdered have closed the case without bringing any charges, a prosecutor said on Wednesday. "At the end of the investigation... it has not been demonstrated that Mr Yasser Arafat was murdered by polonium-210 poisoning," the three judges ruled, according to the prosecutor at Nanterre court near Paris. The decision was blasted as "fundamentally biased" by lawyers for Arafat's widow Suha and rejected by the Palestinian Authority's own inquiry committee. Arafat died in Percy military hospital near Paris aged 75 in November 2004 after developing stomach pains while at his headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah. Many Palestinians accuse Israel of poisoning Arafat, a charge flatly denied by the Jewish state. Arafat's widow has claimed he was poisoned, possibly by highly radioactive polonium. But the judges ruled it out, saying there was "not sufficient evidence of an intervention by a third party who could have attempted to take his life," the prosecutor said. Suha Arafat filed suit in 2012 at the Nanterre court.