

## Headlines:

- **Bashar Uses Chemical Weapons Again**
- **Pakistan Delays Signing Trade Agreement with China**
- **Pakistan Bends to the UN**

## Details:

### **Bashar Uses Chemical Weapons Again**

At least 70 people have died in a suspected chemical attack in Douma, the last rebel-held town in Syria's Eastern Ghouta, rescuers and medics say. Graphic images continue to be tweeted showing several bodies in basements. Syrian officials have called the allegations of a chemical attack a "fabrication" - as has Russia. Witnesses blamed a barrel bomb allegedly dropped by a helicopter. The use of chemical weapons has been a regular tactic used by the al-Assad regime. The West has constantly derided the Assad regime for using chemical weapons, but has done little other than issue lots of statements. The West, the regional nations and Bashar al-Assad are on the same page when it comes to ensuring real change does not come to Syria.

### **Pakistan Delays Signing Trade Agreement with China**

Pakistan has delayed the signing of the second phase of a revised free trade agreement with China over reservations regarding the final list of concessions that Beijing wanted. Pakistan gave concessions on 35% of tariff lines in the first phase of the agreement, resulting in an influx of Chinese goods that local industries couldn't compete with. The *Dawn* Newspaper previously revealed 90% of revenues from Gwadar will be going to China and the details of CPEC remain secret until now but it expected Pakistan will be giving chunks of its economy over to China.

### **Pakistan Bends to the UN**

Pakistan's *Express Tribune* reported Pakistan has officially 'noted' a recommendation made during the third Universal Periodic Review (UPR) which suggest repealing laws barring adultery and non-marital consensual sex. An official working closely with the Ministry of Human Rights confirmed that the recommendation was officially 'noted'. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) will issue the official document in coming days, adding that the document which is publicly available was issued after Pakistan's review in November 2017. The UPR was introduced by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006 and involves a unique process of periodic review of human rights records of all UN member states. The process lets states quantify steps needed for improvement in human rights situations around the globe.