

Lat/Am

**Will economy tank if Obrador wins?:** The fiery leftist **Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador** looks increasingly hard to beat in Mexico's upcoming presidential election — drawing dire warnings from some in the business community that he would wreck Latin America's second-largest economy.

The trillion-dollar question facing Mexicans as they prepare to cast their ballots on July 1 is: would he?

The sharp-tongued, silver-haired former Mexico City mayor, who has a double-digit lead in most recent opinion polls, is locked in an escalating clash with the business world.

After Lopez Obrador said top tycoons do not want him to win because they "don't want to stop stealing" and "think they own Mexico," two prominent business groups took out full-page newspaper ads painting the candidate as a divisive autocrat and threat to the economy.

Other detractors warn Lopez Obrador would turn Mexico into the next Venezuela, whose socialist "revolution" has unravelled into economic catastrophe.

Lopez Obrador — widely known by his initials, AMLO — is trying hard to downplay such fears. But he is also accused of sending mixed messages, depending on who his audience is. (AFP)



Obrador

justice official delivers the latest subpoena from Brazilian investigators to question company employees. The contrasting currents sum up the situation for what used to be one of the most powerful businesses in Latin America as it works to move beyond an astonishing scandal that upended the political order in Brazil, brought down Peru's president and continues to have ripple effects in other nations.

"We have only one chance to change, and to change definitively," said Olga Pontes, chief compliance officer, during an interview with The Associated Press. "We can't make mistakes."

While the company has made considerable efforts to change its culture, questions remain about whether the firm can regain trust, particularly abroad, after years of funneling hundreds of millions of dollars into the pockets of politicians, elected officials, political parties and executives to win construction mega-projects in Brazil and across the region. (AP)

**Colombia rebels declare ceasefire:** Colombia's last active rebel group on Monday declared a five-day ceasefire for the country's presidential election.

The announcement from the National Liberation Army came after peace talks resumed Thursday in Havana, Cuba.

"The ELN will stop military activities from zero hour, May 25, to 24:00 on the 29th to provide favorable conditions permitting Colombian society to express itself in the elections," the group said, using its Spanish acronym.

The rebels' magazine *Insurreccion* carried the announcement in its latest issue, as did the guerrillas' Twitter account.

Colombia's government had said it hoped for agreement on a ceasefire before the May 27 ballot.

President Juan Manuel Santos is trying to conclude a peace agreement with the ELN similar to one signed with the larger FARC guerrillas in November 2016. (AFP)



South African Police Minister Bheki Cele (right), is greeted by Moulana Sayed Afthah Haider, the national co-ordinator of the Ahlul Bait Foundation of South Africa, an umbrella body that oversees Shiite mosques, as he visits the Shiite Muslim Imam Hussain Mosque in Verulam on the outskirts of Durban on May 13. (AFP)

Africa

**Sudan set for major reshuffle:** Sudanese Prime Minister Bakri Hassan Saleh was expected Monday to announce a major cabinet reshuffle that would see eight ministers replaced amid a growing economic crisis, state media reported.

The reshuffle comes weeks after President Omar al-Bashir sacked foreign minister Ibrahim Ghandour after he said that he had been unable to pay his diplomats for months due to a shortage of funds.

The cabinet overhaul was approved by Bashir's ruling National Congress Party at a meeting late on Sunday, the official news agency SUNA reported.

"The reshuffle will see eight ministers and five ministers of state replaced," SUNA quoted Faisal Ibrahim, a top presidential aide, as saying.

The full details was to be announced later on Monday by the prime minister, Ibrahim said, adding that governors of 10 states will also be replaced. (AFP)

**Call on Sudan to pardon teen:** The United Nations and international rights groups have called on Sudan to pardon a 19-year-old girl sentenced to death after she killed her husband as he tried to rape her, saying that she is a victim of child marriage and acted in self-defence.

Noura Hussein is facing death by hanging after a Sharia court, which follows Islamic religious laws, found her guilty of premeditated murder for stabbing her husband as he raped her in April. On Thursday, the court sentenced her to death.

The UN Women, UN Population Fund and UN Office of the Special Advisor on Africa on Sunday appealed to President Omar Hassan al-Bashir's government for clemency for Hussein.

"Reports indicate that she was forced against her will into marriage at the age of 16. She was raped by her husband while his three male relatives held her down," said a joint statement. (RTRS)

**Explosive device at SA mosque:** A device discovered in a mosque near the South African port city of Durban where worshippers were

attacked by armed men last week has been confirmed as explosive, police said on Monday.

The device was discovered on Sunday three days after the attack at the mosque by three men armed with guns and knives. One person was killed after his throat was slit, and two others were injured.

"We had a meeting with the explosive unit members who briefed us on the device they had taken away yesterday. They confirmed that its mechanism is explosive," Simphiwe Mhlongo, a spokesman for the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation told eNCA television. (RTRS)

**Anti-jihadist force set to deploy:** A new five-nation force is ready to deploy to fight jihadists in the Sahel region of northwestern Africa, Niger's defence minister said on Sunday.

The G5 Sahel counter-terrorist force aims to fight armed extremist groups that have carried out deadly attacks across the region.

Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger agreed last year to set up the 5,000-strong force.

They will operate alongside thousands of French and UN forces already deployed in the region along the southern rim of the Sahara desert. (RTRS)

**Nigeria's Abubakar to run for prez:** Nigeria's former vice president Atiku Abubakar will privatise parts of the country's state oil company and allow the naira currency to float to attract foreign investment if elected as head of state, he told Reuters.

Abubakar also confirmed that he intends to run in next year's presidential election, becoming the biggest opposition heavyweight to say he will take on Muhammadu Buhari.

The winner of February's poll will lead Africa's top oil producer and most populous nation, which is central to regional stability as it battles Islamist militants in the northeast.

Abubakar, a former key ally of President Buhari whose resources helped propel him to power, quit the ruling party in November and rejoined the opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) a month later. (RTRS)

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