

**SYNOPSIS:**

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## **1. EUROPEAN DATA PROTECTION REGULATION:**

### **Context:**

European Union's (EU) General Data Protection Regulation has come into effect on May 25, 2018. However, many firms in India are still not ready for compliance with the new law which will cover all entities doing business in the EU.

### **GDPR journey**

- A lot of organisations, especially in the EU region, started their GDPR compliance journey more than a year ago.
- It is only in India that awareness is very low and organisations are still grappling with how to get compliant with GDPR. Compliance is not easy... It is not a one-time job... it impacts not only technology but all aspects of organisation per se.
- only 30-35% of all IT/ITES firms had started work towards being GDPR-compliant.
- a lot of organisations still don't understand how this is applicable to them.
- it is not just IT and ITES companies. Firms across sectors and industries need to be GDPR-compliant.
- Any organisation providing goods and services in the EU, be it a BFSI unit, a manufacturer, a pharma company..., comes under GDPR

### **transform the privacy landscape**

- This regulation will radically transform the privacy landscape for organisations of all sizes and sectors that process personal data.

### **Impacts:**

- GDPR not only impacts Indian organisations, but also global firms who are handling or managing PII data for EU employees, vendors, businesses.
- a lot of focus is on the IT/ITes firms as they contribute about 7% to India's GDP.
- There are areas where GDPR provides relief and consistency, however, it also comes with very stringent penalties on non-compliance
- the impact on SMEs and start-ups are a cause for concern they may struggle with several areas that render it costly for processors
- These include appointing a data protection officer in organisations, the concept of privacy by design (encryption) and by default (processing the minimum amount of data), new privacy rights for individuals like the Right to Erasure and Right to Data Portability, and new consent rules which require consent for different activities from different stakeholders, including employees and customers.

**Need of the hour:**

- Companies have to need to build robust processes and assign responsibilities and accountabilities to address data protection and privacy-related issues. and queries ensure the GDPR requirements. Data protection in some form was always there, especially in the U.S. and EU. However, GDPR is a more stringent form of earlier regulations. “So, companies have been following certain processes already, they now need to take it to the next level. The real impact of this on business will become clear only one or two quarters down the line and will depend mainly on issues of non-compliances and supervisory authority’s consideration.

**Implementation Factor:**

- the cost and time of implementation for required policy and processes implementation will depend on various factors such as maturity level of organisation and size of the data handling., global presence, customer, employee and vendor base in EU and business

model. While implementation can take anywhere from six months to a year or more, the cost can vary between a vast range from organisation to organisation.

### **'Positive impact'**

- GDPR will have a positive impact on the way data is treated globally by the companies. It is difficult for global companies to segregate data and systems in an integrated world.
- GDPR will provide a benchmark of how data protection may be treated. GDPR also gives a sense of comfort to the data subjects and enforces clear purpose, transparency of data when any data controller or processor collects, processes, stores, disposes and archives their personal data.
- Terming the new law as “a tectonic shift in the global privacy paradigm, it would herald a new era in consumer trust.

### **Challenges Ahead:**

- Globally, the increasing number of cybercrimes had made it imperative for companies to keep pace in hiring the right talent to combat them. Therefore, companies across the world are gearing up to ensure compliance to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and ePrivacy requirements. While the larger technology giants are more or less equipped to comply, it is the mid-size and smaller firms that are seeking professionals to help them cope with the requirements the new laws entail.

### **Conclusion:**

This is a golden opportunity for India to drive thought leadership in the global market. We can build expertise and capabilities, create new lines of advisory and consulting businesses, develop a market differentiator and be a source of competitiveness.

## **2. INDIA – US TRADE RELATIONS:**

### **Context:**

With India recalibrating its relations with other powers, the India-U.S. equation is not quite balancing out.

### **Oceanic gulf**

- To begin with, India referred to the Indo-Pacific, a term coined by the U.S. for the Indian and Pacific Oceans region, as a natural geographical region, not a strategic one, while US called the Indo-Pacific a “priority theatre” and a “subset of [America’s] broader security strategy” for his military command, now renamed the Indo-Pacific Command.

- While India referred to India's good relations with the U.S., Russia and China in equal measure, USA vowed to counter China's moves in the Indo-Pacific, and referred to the U.S. National Defence Strategy released this January, which puts both China and Russia in its crosshairs as the world's two "revisionist powers".



### A shift in New Delhi's position

- government seemed clear in its intention to counter China's growing clout in its neighbourhood, especially post-Doklam, challenge the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and back a Quadrilateral grouping of India, the U.S., Japan and Australia to maintain an open Indo-Pacific.
- Today, the Doklam issue has been buried, the BRI isn't as much a concern as before, and the government's non-confrontational attitude to the Maldives and Nepal indicates a softened policy on China in the neighbourhood.
- The Quad formation, which is holding its second official meeting today in Singapore, has also been given short shrift. India rejected an Australian request to join maritime exercises along with the U.S. and Japan this June, and Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba said quite plainly last month that there was no plan to "militarise" the Quad.

### Trade protectionism

- Trade protectionism is clearly the other big point of divergence between India and the U.S., which have in recent months taken each other to the World Trade Organisation on several issues.
- There has been a surge in disputes between the two countries: on the new American steel and aluminium tariffs, the proposed cuts in H1B professional visas and cancellation of H4 spouse visas, on India's tariffs and resistance to U.S. exports of dairy and pork products, on Indian price reductions on medical devices, and Reserve Bank of India rules on data localisation on Indian servers for U.S. companies.

### **The biggest challenges between India and US:**

- The biggest challenges to a common India-U.S. vision are now emerging from the new U.S. law called Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act and the U.S.'s withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal with the threat of more secondary sanctions.
- Both actions have a direct impact on India, given its high dependence on defence hardware from Russia and its considerable energy interests in Iran.
- In particular, India's plans to acquire the Russian S-400 missile system will become the litmus test of whether India and the U.S. can resolve their differences.
- Clearly the differences over a big ticket deal like this should have been sorted out long before the decisions were made; yet there is no indication that the Trump administration and the Modi government took each other into confidence before doing so.

### **3. INDIA'S RANK MARGINALLY RISE IN PEACE INDEX:**

#### **Context:**

- India's rank has marginally improved in "global peacefulness", at a time when there is an overall decline of global peace owing to escalation of violence in West Asia and North Africa.

#### **Other details:**

- Pakistan too has improved marginally, according to the Global Peace Index (GPI), released by Australia-based Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).
- India's GPI rank was 137 out of 163 countries in 2017, when the year 2016 was assessed. In 2018, when the year 2017 is assessed, India's rank moved up to 136. This is in line with the performance of some of the South Asian countries. Nepal moved up from 93 to 84, while Sri Lanka moved up too, from position 80 to 67. Pakistan moved from 152 to 151. "South Asia experienced the largest regional improvement in peacefulness," the report noted.



- However, the best performer of South Asia, Bhutan, has slipped from 13 to 19, while Bangladesh' peace index deteriorated sharply. Bangladesh moved from 84 to 93.
- Syria remained the least peaceful country in the world, a position that it had held for the past five years.
- Iceland continues to remain the most peaceful country in the world, a position it has held since 2008.

#### 4. MAITRI IRRIGATION PROJECT:

##### **Context:**

- India extended a financial aid of Rs 99 million to Nepal for the construction of 2,700 shallow tube well irrigation systems in 12 districts of the country's southern Terai region to boost agricultural productivity.
- The assistance has been extended as part of the final payment for the **Nepal-Bharat Maitri Irrigation Project**, which was launched in January last year to **boost growth to the Himalayan nation's agricultural sector through enhanced facilities**.
- With the aid, Indian has so far released a total of 227.6 million Nepalese rupees to Kathmandu for implementing the project, according to the release.
- The project would ensure all-season irrigation facility to about 8,115 hectares of farm land, augment productivity of wheat, rice and seasonal fruits, vegetables and other crops, it said.
- It would also uplift the socio-economic status of farming families in the 12 districts covered under the project.
- Recognising the scope for improving agricultural productivity in Nepal, India has been partnering with Nepal for development of Deep Tube Wells (DTWs) and Shallow Tube Wells (STWs) in various regions for several years.

#### 5. 2+2 DIALOGUE

- It is a diplomatic arrangement between India and U.S.
- It is going to be held in July in which Indian External Affairs and Defence Ministry will held meeting with their U.S counterparts.
- It is expected to further cement the India-U.S. engagements.
- It key focus areas will be concluding COMCASA and BECA pacts.
- Sale of armed drones is high on the agenda of the 2+2 dialogue.
- The U.S. has been engaging India since 2002 on the foundational agreements.
- But successive governments have been wary of giving in to the U.S. demands due to fear that these pacts may compromise India-Russia military ties.

##### **India – U.S Defence Pacts**

- There are four foundational agreements that helps the U.S. to intensify its defence cooperation with a partner nation such as India.

- India has already signed two pacts such as Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) and General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA).
- LEMOA gives both nations access to each other's military facilities. But it does not make it automatic or obligatory.
- GSOMIA paved the way for greater technology cooperation in the military sector.
- The other two pacts which India yet to ratify are Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation (BECA).
- COMCASA will facilitate transfer of encrypted communications systems.
- It helps in sharing high-tech military hardware, especially armed drones which the U.S. is willing to supply to India.
- BECA facilitates exchange of geospatial information.

#### 6. ASSUMPTION ISLAND:

- India's plans for a military base have hit a roadblock. Why is this tiny island of Seychelles important?
- Spanning just 11.6 sq km, a small island in the Indian Ocean has gained new attention with Seychelles saying that India's plans to build a military base "will not move forward".
- Assumption Island, a single coral island, belongs to the Outer Islands District of Seychelles.
- With only a small village on the sheltered western side and a 1,210-m concrete airfield running from there to the southeastern coast, the island's few inhabitants, mostly farmers and fishermen, have to go to Victoria (the capital) for government services.





### **Why it is important for India?**

- The island's location is ideal for monitoring the Mozambique Channel, which sees significant international trade.
- A naval base there would help India secure its merchant ships, be a resource for other shipping nations, and help combat China's increasing clout in the Indian Ocean.

### **7. INDIA & SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION:**

#### **Context:**

- Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Qingdao, China was the first SCO summit attended by India as a full-fledged member.

#### **Significance for India**

- SCO now has about half the world's population and a quarter of its GDP. Its boundary extends southwards to the Indian Ocean.
- The SCO's relevance for India lies in geography, economics and geopolitics.
- India has important economic and security interests in these countries.
- With India having complicated ties with neighbours, it makes sense to strengthen ties with its neighbours' neighbours.
- With Pakistan joining the Organisation and Afghanistan and Iran knocking on the doors for membership, the logic of India's membership becomes stronger.
- Expanding opportunities for India in Central Asia: India's relations with Central Asian countries have been constrained by lack of overland access through Pakistan and Afghanistan/Iran, because of political and/or security reasons.
- SCO should help in this regard.
- Russian and Chinese officials suggested that harmonious cooperation in the SCO may pave the way for an India-Pakistan rapprochement, recalling that SCO membership had facilitated resolution of China's boundary disputes with Russia and Central Asian countries.

#### **Challenging areas:**

- The SCO is expected to nudge both countries to cooperate in sensitive areas. One example is the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) of the SCO, which coordinates cooperation for security and stability, through intelligence-sharing on criminal and terrorist activities. India and Pakistan have to find ways of cooperating in the RATS.
- Defence cooperation is another tricky area: enhanced linkages between armed forces is an SCO objective. India has agreed to participate in the SCO's counter-terrorism military exercises in Russia later this year, when Indian and Pakistani troops will operate together.

- Reconciling Indian and Pakistani perspectives in the SCO's initiatives on Afghanistan would be yet another challenge.
- The challenge for India — besides that of security and defence cooperation with Pakistan — may come from increasing Chinese dominance of the SCO.

### About SCO

- SCO grew out of the Shanghai Five grouping — of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan — which was set up in 1996 to resolve boundary disputes between China and each of the four other members.
- It admitted Uzbekistan in 2001, re-christened itself the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and broadened its agenda to include political, economic and security cooperation.
- It admitted India and Pakistan as full members in 2017.



## 8. INDIA- MONGOLIA:

### Context:

- Mongolia launched construction of its first oil refinery, a long-awaited project that is funded by India and designed to end the country's dependence on Russian fuel.

### More about the refinery:

- The refinery, in southern Dornogovi province will be capable of processing 1.5 million tonnes of crude oil per year.
- The refinery will be small by international standards, with most Chinese facilities each processing hundreds of thousands of barrels of crude per day, and India's Reliance Industries running one refinery at a record 1.2 million bpd.
- Still, Mongolia's new refinery, planned for completion in late 2022, will meet all of the nation's demand for gasoline, diesel, aviation fuel and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).
- By establishing this strategically important oil refinery, the national economy will become independent from energy imports, and fuel and commodity prices will be stabilised.
- The project is expected to boost Mongolia's gross domestic product by 10 percent.
- Mongolia imported almost 1.5 million tonnes of oil products last year, virtually all from Russia. They amounted to 18 percent of all Mongolia's imports, according to official data.
- Mongolia, a large landlocked country wedged between giants China and Russia, has a population of just 3 million. Almost half its people live as nomadic stock herders, and the country's oil demand is growing only very slowly.

### Facts for Prelims:

- Mongolia considers India a "third neighbor" as well as a "spiritual neighbor" (the late venerable Kushok Bakula Rinpoche, a Buddhist monk who is revered in Mongolia, was the Indian ambassador to Ulaanbaatar for 10 years).
- India shares historical relations with Mongolia in terms of culture from over 2700 years.
- Nomadic Elephant was the Counter-Terrorism joint military exercise conducted by India and Mongolia in 2016

## 9. APTA & ITS RELEVANCE

### Context:

- India has agreed to provide tariff concessions on 3,142 products to Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA) members. These duty concessions will be more for least developed countries (LDCs) and less for developing nations.

**About APTA:**

- The Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), previously named the Bangkok Agreement, was signed in 1975 as an initiative of ESCAP.
- The six member countries are Bangladesh, China, India, Laos, Korea and Sri Lanka.
- Being the oldest preferential trade agreement among developing countries in Asia-Pacific, APTA aims to promote economic development through the adoption of mutually beneficial trade liberalization measures that will contribute to intra-regional trade expansion and provides for economic integration through coverage of merchandise goods, services, investment and trade facilitation.
- Open to all developing member countries, APTA is a truly region-wide trade agreement spanning East and South Asia, with potential to expand to other sub-regions, including Central Asia and the Pacific.
- APTA is the first plurilateral agreement among the developing countries in the region to adopt common operational procedures for certification and verification of the origin of goods and it has the longest effective implementation period amongst the trade agreements in the entire Asia-Pacific.
- Notably, APTA is the only operational trade agreement linking China and India, two of the fastest growing markets in the world, and other major markets such as the Republic of Korea.



- The boundaries shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

## 10. WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANISATION TREATIES (WIPO)

### **Context:**

Cabinet approves accession to WIPO Copyright Treaty, 1996 and WIPO Performance and Phonograms Treaty, 1996. The treaties extend coverage of copyright to the internet and digital environment.

### **Benefits:**

Meeting the demand of the copyright industries, these treaties will help India:

- To enable creative right-holders enjoy the fruit of their labour, through international copyright system that can be used to secure a return on the investment made in producing and distributing creative works;
- To facilitate international protection of domestic rights holder by providing them level-playing field in other countries as India already extends protection to foreign works through the International Copyright order and these treaties will enable Indian right holders to get reciprocal protection abroad;
- To instil confidence and distribute creative works in digital environment with return on investment; and
- To spur business growth and contribute to the development of a vibrant creative economy and cultural landscape.

### **Background:**

#### **Copyright Act, 1957:**

- After the administration of Copyright Act 1957 was transferred to DIPP in March 2016, a study was initiated to examine compatibility of Copyright Act 1957 with WCT and WPPT. Also a joint study was undertaken with WIPO.
- The Copyright Act, 1957 was amended in 2012 to bring it in conformity, with WCT and WPPT, includes amendment in definition of “Communication to the public” to make it applicable to digital environment (Section 2(ff)) as also introduced provisions related to Technological • Protection Measures (Section 65A) & Rights Management Information (Section 65B); Moral rights of performers (Section 38B); Exclusive rights of the performers (Section 38A); safe harbour provisions over electronic medium (Section 52 (1) (b) and (c)),

**WIPO Copyright Treaty** came in force on March 6, 2002 and has been adopted by 96 contracting parties till date and is A Special agreement under Berne Convention (for protection of literary and artistic works). It has provisions to extend the protection of copyrights contained therein to the digital environment. Further it recognises the rights specific to digital

environment, of making work available, to address “on-demand” and other interactive modes of access,

**WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty** came in force on May 20, 2002 and has 96 contracting parties as its members. WPPT deals with rights of two kinds of beneficiaries, particularly in digital environment – (i) Performers (actors, singers, musicians etc.) (ii) Producers of Phonograms (Sound recordings). The treaty empowers right owners in their negotiations with new digital platforms and distributors. It recognizes moral rights of the performers for the first time & provides exclusive economic rights to them.

Both the treaties provide framework for creators and right owners to use technical tools to protect their works and safeguard information about their use i.e. Protection of Technological Protection Measures (TPMs) and Rights Management Information (RMI).

## 11. INDIA- IRAN OIL TRADE:

### What is it?

- **Iran** has always been one of India’s main suppliers of oil, second only to Iraq and Saudi Arabia, with exports that totalled more than 27 million tonnes last year. The figures make India Iran’s biggest buyer after China, and as a result, a target for the U.S. which has declared a campaign to “isolate Iran” after the Trump administration withdrew from the multilateral nuclear deal.
- For India, which has been told along with other buyers to take oil imports to “zero” by the cut-off date of November 4, its decisions on procuring Iran oil this point onwards is not so much about securing energy as it is about securing India’s standing in the world.
- If it rejects U.S. pressure, it risks sanctions as well as incurring the displeasure of its all-powerful friend and defence partner.
- If it yields, it risks its relationship with traditional partner Iran, access to important trade routes through Chabahar and the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC), as well as its international reputation.

### How did it come about?

- In 2012, when the Obama administration wanted to maximise pressure on Iran in order to secure the nuclear deal or the Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action, it had sent a similar tough message to New Delhi, albeit more discreetly than the Trump administration has.
- The then Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, recounts in her book *Hard Choices* that when she visited New Delhi in May 2012, the “more loudly we urged [India] to change course, the more likely they were to dig in their heels.” India agreed to cut oil imports by 15% subsequently, but asserted its autonomy.
- Three months later, the then Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, even visited Tehran to attend the Non-Alignment Summit, despite U.S. objections.



- Eventually, New Delhi operationalised a ‘rupee-rial’ mechanism, under which half of what it owed Tehran for oil imports would be held in a UCO Bank account and made available to Iranian companies to use for any imports from India, an arrangement the Narendra Modi government is seeking to re-energise.

### **Why does it matter?**

- But 2018 is not 2012, and the stakes are higher for the government.
- Ties with the U.S. are under strain over several issues, including U.S. trade tariffs and India’s defence procurement from Russia, and a major divergence on Iran will exacerbate the problem with India’s biggest trading partner and fastest growing defence partnership.
- Moreover, in an increasingly globalised world, where Indian companies compete, any U.S. sanctions will make it hard for refiners, insurers and transport companies to facilitate oil trade, even if India wishes to continue it.
- On the other hand, India’s investment in the Iranian relationship has increased, making a turnaround much more difficult. Just five months ago, New Delhi rolled out the red carpet for Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani and committed itself to increasing its oil off-take by 25% this year, as part of easing negotiations for the Farzad-B gas fields India is keen to buy a stake in. India has also committed itself to investing \$500 million to build berths at Chabahar’s Shahid Beheshti Port, and \$2 billion to build a rail line through the Zahedan province to Afghanistan, in an effort to circumvent trade restrictions by Pakistan. Iran’s other oil importers, China and Turkey, have said they will not accept the U.S.’s diktat.
- What lies ahead?
- In the next four months, one can expect complex negotiations between New Delhi and Tehran, and New Delhi and Washington.
- A U.S. team is expected in Delhi this month, and while a senior State Department official ruled out “waivers or licences” to any country, he did hold out the hope that some flexibility might be negotiable “case-by-case” for countries that agree to reduce oil intake from Iran. Mr. Rouhani, who is on a European tour discussing ways to retain the JCPOA, has warned of dire consequences if the U.S. succeeds in having Iran’s oil exports cut, as this is a “national security” issue. While India’s oil supplies are diversified, its options in this game of diplomatic brinkmanship are narrowing.

### **12. RUSSIA S-400 TRIUMF:**

#### **What is it?**

- S-400 Triumph is one of the world’s most advanced air defence systems that can simultaneously track numerous incoming objects — all kinds of aircraft, missiles and UAVs — in a radius of a few hundred kilometres and launch appropriate missiles to neutralise them.

- It is now bang in the middle of the ongoing stand-off between **Russia** and Western nations. Among the countries under pressure from the U.S. not to buy this weapon is India.
- The system is a large complex of radars, control systems and different types of missiles.
- The highly automated S-400 has radars that can pick up an incoming object up to a 1,000 kilometres away, track several dozen incoming objects simultaneously, distribute the targets to appropriate missile systems and ensure a high success rate.
- The command post detects, tracks and identifies the target.
- Then the tracked object is taken over by manned anti-aircraft missile systems of the complex, which launch the counter attack.
- The development of S-400 (NATO name SA-21 Growler) was started towards the end of the Soviet Union in the 1980s and was disrupted by the collapse of the Communist bloc in 1991.
- The system is specifically designed to detect and destroy an array of targets — strategic bombers; aircraft used for electronic warfare, early warning, and reconnaissance; fighter jets such as F-16 and F-22; and incoming missiles such as Tomahawk.
- Russian forces have deployed at least half-a-dozen S-400 regiments, at least two of them are for the protection of Moscow.
- Russia has also deployed at least two S-400 systems in Syria, much to the concern of observers who fear the system could contribute to a global conflict breaking out in Syria.

#### **How did it come about?**

- S-400 traces its origins to the desperation of the Cold War period to find a credible counter to the threat from missiles and incoming enemy aircraft. S-400 is a dramatic improvement from its predecessor S-300, which was the mainstay of Soviet Union's air defence during the Cold War, when nuclear missile threat was at its peak.
- S-300 was initially developed against incoming cruise missiles and aircraft, but the latter versions could also intercept ballistic missiles. They were deployed in the 1970s across Soviet Union for protecting key industrial complexes, cities, and other strategic assets.
- Today, the S-400 uses four different types of missiles and can track and shoot down incoming objects as far away as 400 kilometres, while it also has shorter-range missiles to track and shoot down objects that are closer.

#### **Why does it matter?**

- The acquisition of S-400 by countries such as India and Turkey has taken centre stage in the American diplomacy regarding Russia. Upfront, the recent sanctions against Russian entities, especially its military manufacturers and suppliers, mean any country buying the system may run into trouble.
- Besides, the U.S. has singled out the acquisition of S-400, telling potential customers such as India and Turkey that it is opposed to the move. It believes that S-400 could access sensitive U.S. military technologies in service with the potential buyers.

Congressman Mac Thornberry, Chairman of the U.S. House Armed Services Committee, during a recent visit to New Delhi, said: “There is lot of concern in the U.S. over the S-400 system. There is concern that any country, and not just India, that chooses to acquire the system will make it harder to have the level of interoperability we want to have.”

#### **What next?**

- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said the negotiations for the S-400 were in a “conclusive stage.” There are conflicting reports about Turkey’s plan. American diplomats have accused Russia of “flipping” Turkey with the S-400 offer, while Turkey claims it is a defensive system. At the NATO summit in Brussels early this week, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said the first batch of the S-400 system would be in Turkey by late 2019.