

Weekly Media Updates **(18 – 24 June, 2018)**

Contents

Regions and Themes covered this Week

- **Africa**
- **Central Asia**
- **China**
- **Latin America and Caribbean**
- **North America**
- **Russia**
- **South Asia**
- **Indian Ocean**
- **West Asia**
- **Terrorism and Counter Terrorism**

Africa

- **Deadly Explosion Hits Ethiopia's PM Abiy Ahmed's Rally¹**

A deadly explosion struck a huge rally for Ethiopia's reformist new prime minister on 23 June 2018, Saturday, shortly after he spoke and was waving to the crowd that had turned out in numbers unseen in recent years. Addressing the country minutes after he was hurried to safety, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed called the blast a "well-orchestrated attack" but one that failed. He did not lay blame but said police were investigating.

The explosion in packed Meskel Square in the capital, Addis Ababa, came after weeks of sweeping reforms that had shocked many in the country after years of anti-government tensions, states of emergency, thousands of arrests and long internet shutdowns. The 42-year-old Abiy took office in April and quickly announced the release of tens of thousands of prisoners, the opening of state-owned companies to private investment and the unconditional embrace of a peace deal with rival Eritrea.

- **South Sudan armed opposition rejects 'imposition' of peace deal²**

South Sudan's armed opposition through a statement on 21 June 2018 rejected any "imposition" of a peace deal and said more time is needed to secure lasting peace in the country and it would be necessary to address the root causes of a civil war after the first face-to-face meeting between President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar in almost two years.

The opposition statement called meeting held on 20 June 2018 "cordial" and said both sides discussed the prospects for peace "in broad terms". But it warned that the current model for the peace process is "unrealistic" and that "there is no shortcut to peace".

The group said "For any meaningful dialogue to take place, it should be within the context of a comprehensive political settlement." It said the solution to the five-year civil war, which has killed tens of thousands of people and forced more than 3 million people to flee their homes, was to revisit the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The CPA was agreed in 2005 between Sudan and South Sudan that was aimed at ending the civil war in Sudan and paved the way for South Sudan to hold its ultimately successful secession.

- **Al-Shabaab Kills 8 Kenyan Security Personnel³**

Eight Kenyan security personnel were killed in an attack by al-Shabab fighters on 24 June 2018, Sunday, in northeastern Wajir County. The area has been a frequent site of attacks by militants crossing the border from Somalia. The security personnel were on patrol when they were attacked near the town of Bojigaras. Authorities said the militants fled toward the Somalia border.

Northeastern Kenya has been the site of some of al-Shabab's most deadly attacks. In December 2014, the group killed 38 non-Muslims at a quarry in Mandera. Al-Shabab has

¹ Radio France International, 23 June 2018,

http://allafrica.com/stories/201806230172.html?utm_campaign=allafrica%3Ainternal&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_content=promote%3Aaans%3Aabafbt

² Aljazeera, 21 June 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/06/south-sudan-armed-opposition-rejects-imposition-peace-deal-180621165737924.html>

³ VOA, 19 June 2018,

http://allafrica.com/stories/201806190232.html?utm_campaign=allafrica%3Ainternal&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_content=promote%3Aaans%3Aabafbt

targeted Kenya in retaliation for the country's involvement in AMISOM, the African Union force in Somalia that backs the federal government.

- **Mauritius ranked Africa's most peaceful country, and The Gambia records largest improvement⁴**

Mauritius has been ranked in the top 20 of the world's most peaceful countries, out of 163 countries, in the 12th edition of 2018 Global Peace Index (GPI). On the continent Botswana came second, and ranked 29 globally. Sierra Leone was ranked (35), Madagascar (38), Ghana (41), Namibia (43), Malawi (44) and Zambia (48) respectively on the Global Index. Of the five countries with the largest improvements in peace, four are from sub-Saharan Africa, including the Gambia and Liberia, which had the largest overall improvements in peacefulness. According to the index, the single largest country improvement occurred in The Gambia, "where improvements in political instability, perceptions of criminality, and relations with neighbouring countries saw it improve 35 places in the rankings, moving up to 76th". Liberia had the second largest overall improvement in peace of any country, moving up 27 places in the rankings. A product of the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), the index measures the relative position of nations' and regions' peacefulness using three broad thematic areas: the level of safety and security in society, the extent of domestic and international conflict, and the degree of militarisation. It ranks countries based on 23 qualitative and quantitative peace indicators.

- **Five South African Cities Named Amongst Most Vulnerable to Climate Change⁵**

The C40 Cities conference in Cape Town has revealed that Cape Town, Paarl, Port Elizabeth, East London and Durban are the most vulnerable places in South Africa which face the greatest threat of climate change. Given the current drought situation in Cape Town, it's perhaps no surprise to see that it makes the list. These areas are at the mercy of rising sea levels caused by the melting polar ice caps in Antarctica. With South Africa having no clear land mass between itself and the depleted continent, there's a serious issue to be considered. C40 estimate that 570 cities – almost all of them based on the coast – will be at high risk of flooding and adverse conditions caused by the sea before 2050.

- **South Sudanese Rebel Leader Returns to South Africa after Peace Talks⁶**

The leader of South Sudan's armed opposition faction, Riek Machar returned to South Africa on June 23, 2018 where he has been confined for the nearly two years. Machar was in Ethiopia for face-to-face discussions held on June 20, 2018 with President Salva Kiir under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) chairperson, Abiy Ahmed. The regional bloc, in a communiqué issued on 21 June, said the South Sudanese rebel leader should be free to leave South Africa to any country of his choice except the IGAD region and that he shall be allowed to enter into and exit from Sudan and Kenya for the duration of the peace process. IGAD also mandated the Sudanese President, Omar Hassan Al-Bashir to facilitate a second round of face-to-face discussion between President Kiir and Machar within two weeks to build on the Addis Ababa face-to-face talks. The meeting, to be held in Khartoum, is expected to discuss and resolve the outstanding issues on governance and security arrangements including measures proposed in the revised bridging proposal of the IGAD Council of Ministers.

- **DRC Polls to be Held on December 23, Foreign Minister Assures Angola⁷**

⁴ This is Africa, 22 June 2015, <https://thisisafrika.me/mauritius-africas-peaceful-country/>

⁵ The South African, June 19, 2018, <https://www.thesouthafrican.com/south-african-cities-vulnerable-to-climate-change/>

⁶ Sudan Tribune, June 23, 2018, <http://sudantribune.com/spip.php?article65711>

A special envoy from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on June 18 briefed Angolan President Joao Lourenco on the DRC's upcoming elections. The DRC is committed to holding general elections on Dec. 23, DRC Foreign Minister Leonard She Okitundu told the press after meeting with Lourenco, who is also president of the Southern African Development Community's political cooperation, defense and security body. Filing nominations for the legislative and presidential elections will kick off on July 24, the minister added. Initially marked for Dec. 31, 2017, the DRC elections were rescheduled for December 23, 2018 after the opposition demanded the departure of Joseph Kabila, whose presidential mandate expired in 2016. Constitutionally, Kabila is barred from running for another presidential term. The former president has said he would comply with the electoral calendar.

- **UNHCR Pleased with Conditions of Congolese Refugees in Angola⁸**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has acknowledged Angola's role in protecting the refugees from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), based in the eastern Lunda Norte province. The recognition came from the UNHCR representative in Angola, Philippa Candler, during a meeting with the president of the 10th Commission on Human Rights, Petitions, Complaints and Suggestions of the Citizens of the National Assembly, Raúl Danda held in Luanda on June 20, 2018. Official data indicate that until March this year, the Lóvua-based refugee settlement center in Lunda Norte controlled 35,000 displaced persons from DRC, of whom 77 per cent were women. Philippa Candler did not present any statistics, but said that part of this population is returning to the country of origin. She added that at the moment there are between 22,000 and 23,000 people, who are benefitting from good assistance. On the other hand, the official regretted that the institution had raised only eight percent of the more than US\$ 63 million needed at the time to assist the refugees.

- **Chinese Institute Available to Support Angola's Agricultural Development⁹**

The Institute of Agricultural Sciences and Technologies of Jiangsu is available to train Angolan farmers and provide technical support to the agro-industrial production process in order to contribute to the economic development of the country, said on June 21, 2018 in Huambo the chairman of the institution's school council. Ji Wenlin, who had been received by provincial governor João Baptista Kussumua, also said that the institute intends to cooperate with the Faculty of Agrarian Sciences of the José Eduardo dos Santos University, in the city of Huambo, aiming to train teachers and support companies in the agro-food sector. He also said that technicians from the Jiangsu Institute are supporting an agricultural project in the Chicala-Cholohanga district, in Huambo province, while in the area of training nine Angolans are attending various courses at the institution.

- **Zimbabwe's President Unhurt After 'Cowardly' Blast at Rally¹⁰**

President Emmerson Mnangagwa escaped injury in an explosion at a political rally on June 23, 2018 and vowed the "cowardly act" would not derail Zimbabwe's first election since the ouster of former strongman Robert Mugabe. Mnangagwa, a former Mugabe loyalist installed after the army ousted his erstwhile patron, said the object had "exploded a few inches away from me, but it is not my time." The blast came as Zimbabwe prepared to hold its first post-Mugabe presidential election on July 30, with 75-year-old Mnangagwa

⁷ Xinhua Net, June 19, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/19/c_137265252.htm

⁸ Relief Web, June 20, 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/report/angola/unhcr-pleased-conditions-congolese-refugees-angola>

⁹ Macau Hub, June 22, 2018, <https://macauhub.com.mo/2018/06/22/pt-instituto-chines-disponivel-para-apoiar-desenvolvimento-agricola-de-angola/>

¹⁰ Reuters, June 23, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-zimbabwe-politics/zimbabwes-president-unhurt-after-cowardly-blast-at-rally-idUSKBN1JJ0JH>

and 40-year-old Nelson Chamisa, the leader of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, the main contenders. Authorities gave no details of what had caused the explosion at Mnangagwa's first rally in Bulawayo, an opposition stronghold where the ruling ZANU-PF has not won in national elections since 2000. Mnangagwa said the injured included Vice President Kembo Mohadi, the wife of Vice President Constantino Chiwenga, the environment minister and the deputy speaker of parliament. State television ZBC said 42 people were injured in the explosion, six of them seriously.

- **Botswana Notifies WTO of Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak¹¹**

Botswana notified its trading partners on June 19, 2018 of a suspected outbreak of foot and mouth disease in cattle in its Ngamiland district and said it had banned meat exports from the area, adding there was no impact on exports to the European Union. In a filing published by the World Trade Organisation, Botswana said officials from its Department of Veterinary Services found five animals with signs of the disease in Ngamiland in the north of the country, an area bordering Namibia and Zimbabwe. "As a result of these findings the slaughter and movement of all cloven hoofed animals and their fresh products within and out of the Sehithwa, Toteng, Bodibeng, Kareng and Semboyo extension areas are suspended until further notice," it said. Vaccinations had begun, the filing said.

- **Botswana to Host 6th SACU Summit¹²**

The Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU) Summit will be attended by the Heads of State and government representatives from the Kingdom of Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa. The Summit which will be held on 29 June in Gaborone, Botswana, will consider progress being made on the implementation of the Ministerial Work Programme, which was approved by the SACU Council of Ministers and endorsed by the Summit in June 2017. This Work Programme was developed following introspection of SACU's relevance and as an organisation that supports the economies of its Member States by the Council of Ministers at their 3rd Retreat held in June 2016.

- **Mauritius to Sell Citizenship and Passports to Foreign Investors¹³**

Mauritius has announced that it would be offering foreigners the chance to obtain Mauritian citizenship in exchange for a non-refundable US\$1 million. For an additional cost of US\$100,000, foreigners can also purchase citizenship for their dependents. The money would go to the country's sovereign wealth fund. This is the first time any country has offered citizenship in exchange for money in its wealth fund. For foreigners who cannot afford US\$1 million, they can purchase Mauritian citizenship with US\$500,000, and also US\$50,000 per passport for family members. Mauritian passport holders have access to 131 countries around the world, and the passport is 33rd according to the Henley visa restrictions index, which measures the travel freedom that citizens of a country enjoy through their passports. In January of 2017, Mauritius with Serbia and Seychelles became the only countries whose citizens may travel to either China, Russia or the Schengen Area without needing visas. Economists in the country believe Mauritius can be used as a springboard for investments in China and India.

- **India Completes Refit of Mauritian Patrol Vessel¹⁴**

¹¹ Reuters, June 19, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-botswana-livestock/botswana-notifies-wto-of-foot-and-mouth-disease-outbreak-idUSKBN1JF27M>

¹² Namibia Economist, June 18, 2018, <https://economist.com.na/36066/extra/botswana-to-host-6th-sacu-summit/>

¹³ Ventures Africa, June 20, 2018, <http://venturesafrica.com/tanzanias-plans-to-industrialize-receive-major-boost-from-the-world-bank/>

¹⁴ Defence Web, June 19, 2018, http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52090:india-completes-refit-of-mauritian-patrol-vessel&catid=51:Sea&Itemid=106

The Indian Navy has completed the refit of the 32 year old Mauritius Coast Guard service vessel MCGS Guardian. In a statement, the Indian Navy said the refurbishment, which began in December 2017, was done at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai. Major works involved upgrades to the hull, engineering, electrical and weapons systems. The Indian Navy said Rear Admiral Superintendent Sandeep Naithani of the dockyard in Mumbai reported that the Guardian has completed all sea trials. It is now due to sail back home to Mauritius. The Guardian was donated to the Mauritius Coast Guard by the Indian Navy in 1993. Since then, India has supplied the spares to keep the vessel afloat. The boat underwent its first refit carried out by the Indian Navy in 2006.

- **East African Court Rules Tanzania Newspaper Ban Illegal¹⁵**

The East African Court of Justice on June 21, 2018 said Tanzania must annul the publication ban placed on a local weekly newspaper two years ago. Mseto was suspended for three years in August 2016 after publishing allegations that President John Magufuli's successful election campaign the previous year had been partly financed through corrupt means. Tanzania's information ministry banned Mseto for "publishing incitements and false news". However, the court said the suspension must be lifted as the newspaper had not "violated the public interest, or the interest of peace and good order" and that the ban is "in violation of the right of freedom of expression". There was no immediate response from Tanzanian authorities.
- **World Bank Approves US\$455 Million Loan for Tanzania Power Projects¹⁶**

The World Bank has approved a US\$455 million loan to Tanzania under its International Development Assistance (IDA) programme to support financing of power projects in the East African nation. The financing from IDA, which gives grants or low-interest loans to the world's poorest countries, will also fund construction of high voltage transmission infrastructure to connect Tanzania to regional power markets in southern and eastern Africa. The government said it plans to raise 2 trillion Tanzanian shillings (US\$880 million) in its budget for fiscal year 2018/19 (July-June) from concessional loans and grants to finance development projects.
- **US State Department Imposes Visa Ban on Several DR Congo Officials¹⁷**

The United States said on June 21, 2018 that it had imposed visa bans on several senior officials in the Democratic Republic of Congo for corruption tied to the country's electoral process to send a "strong signal" about the need for a peaceful transfer of power. Washington declined to identify the individuals, saying it was not obligated to reveal them based on "foreign policy considerations." The move comes before elections scheduled in DRC for December 23, 2018. There are concerns, however, that President Joseph Kabila, who succeeded his assassinated father Laurent in 2001, could delay the vote to seek a third elected term. The visa ban comes after the US Treasury sanctioned Israeli billionaire Dan Gertler on June 15, who it said had amassed a fortune through corrupt mining and oil deals in the DRC, using his close friendship with Kabila.
- **DRC Set for Turmoil as Jean-Pierre Bemba Expected Home Within Weeks¹⁸**

Jean-Pierre Bemba, the Congolese opposition leader, whose war crimes convictions at the international criminal court (ICC) were quashed, is expected to return to the Democratic Republic of the Congo within weeks, risking an intense new phase of political

¹⁵ Daily Nation, June 22, 2018, <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/East-African-court-rules-Tanzania-newspaper-ban-illegal/1066-4625808-113ex8iz/index.html>

¹⁶ Africa News, June 22, 2018, <http://www.africanews.com/2018/06/22/world-bank-approves-455-million-loan-for-tanzania-power-projects/>

¹⁷ Reuters, June 22, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-congo-sanctions/us-state-department-imposes-visa-ban-on-several-drcongo-officials-idUSKBN1JI043>

¹⁸ The Guardian, June 23, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/23/drc-jean-pierre-bemba-expected-home-within-weeks-kabila>

manoeuvring and instability in the vast and impoverished central African state. Bemba, a former rebel leader and vice president, left the country in 2007 and spent the last 10 years in prison in The Hague before his surprise acquittal on appeal. The 55-year-old is free in Belgium pending a hearing on a separate conviction for attempting to influence witnesses, but will travel to his homeland to attend a party congress to select a candidate for a presidential election due in December, a party spokesman said on June 22, 2018.

- **Kenya Rejects US Pressure to Seize Assets of South Sudan Leaders¹⁹**

Kenya has rejected fresh pressure from the United States to seize the properties of South Sudanese leaders that were allegedly bought with proceeds from corruption, money laundering and war profits. Officials from Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs say the country is happy to share intelligence with the US on illicit money flows from South Sudan, but it must first establish mechanisms for verifying the reports provided by Washington DC. Foreign Affairs Principal Secretary Macharia Kamau said Kenya is capable of seizing properties from illicit proceeds but will only act within the context of international practices through the United Nations conventions and the Bretton Woods institutions. "Kenya knows its obligations in regards to corruption and money laundering, and is working closely with the international community on the same. However, we work with multilateral platforms and don't take instructions from other sovereign states," Mr Kamau said.

- **DP World Responds to Reports Over Djibouti Settlement²⁰**

DP World said in a statement over the weekend that media reports that it is looking for an out-of-court settlement in its ongoing dispute with the Djiboutian government over Doraleh Container Terminal are incorrect. "It has been noted in some reports that DP World may consider an out of court settlement with respect to the dispute with the Djiboutian government over their illegal action in taking control of the port at Doraleh," a company statement said. A DP World spokesperson said that the concession agreement remains in place, and the action taken by the Djiboutian government is subject to legal process in the International court of Arbitration in London. "We await the outcome of this process. We remain committed to operating Doraleh port as per original agreement of the concession, and we will not consider any other alternative settlement option." Doraleh Container Terminal was designed and built by DP World in 2006 and was operated by the global UAE-based port operator until earlier this year when the Djiboutian government seized control of the terminal.

- **Boko Haram Kills Nine Soldiers in Nigeria²¹**

Boko Haram fighters killed nine soldiers and wounded two others in northeast Nigeria, according to military sources, just days after 43 civilians died in deadly suicide bombings. Both attacks came as the government, which says the jihadists are on the verge of defeat, urges those displaced by the conflict to return to their homes across the war-torn region. Troops from 242 battalion Nigerian Army stationed at Gajiram, some 80 kilometres north of the Borno state capital, Maiduguri, came under attack in the afternoon on June 18, 2018. The Borno state police initially said its officers and soldiers "engaged the terrorists and promptly repelled the attack". "There was no casualty on the side of the police," it added. But military communications seen by AFP said nine soldiers were classed as "KIA" -- killed in action -- while two others were "WIA" -- wounded in action.

¹⁹ <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Kenya-rejects-US-push-to-seize-assets-of-S-Sudan-leaders/1056-4617874-7ro4e9z/index.html>

²⁰ Middle East Logistics, June 18, 2018, <https://www.logisticsmiddleeast.com/business/30905-dp-world-responds-to-reports-over-djibouti-settlement>

²¹ eNCA, June 20, 2018, <https://www.enca.com/africa/boko-haram-kills-nine-soldiers-in-nigeria>

North Africa

- **Libyan Coastguard Picks up 443 Migrants Heading to Italy**²²

In a recent development, the coastal guard in Libya rescued 301 migrants, including three women and 46 children from 12 different sub-Saharan countries as Libya has become a main departure point for migrants fleeing wars and poverty to reach European countries. It is also a fact that the crossings have dropped sharply in last one year due to a more active coastguard supported by EU and additional financing by European countries. It is reported that the illegal migrants were crossing the sea on two big rubber boats, and suddenly the engines of the two boats stopped working in the middle of sea. One of the eyewitness said that the coastguard had also recovered three bodies and rescued 142 illegal migrants 25 miles off Tripoli's eastern Qarabulli town after their boat got torn in the middle of sea. Most migrants try to head across the Mediterranean towards Italy, hoping they will be picked up by ships run by aid groups and taken there, although many drown before they are rescued.

However, earlier this month, Italy's alleged anti-immigrant Interior Minister Matteo Salvini vowed to no longer let charity ships offload rescued migrants in Italy, leaving one ship stranded at sea for several days with more than 600 migrants until Spain offered them safe haven. German Chancellor Angela Merkel will reportedly try to persuade other EU leaders to agree a common policy on migrants although her chances of winning support from all 28 member states are slim.

- **Egypt Goes for Another Extension of Emergency in Country**²³

In another extension, Egypt has been put under emergency for further three months starting 14 July after the national Parliament gave its approval on 24 June. The ongoing state of emergency was extended by a Presidential Decree issued by President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi but was pending approval by Parliament.

It is worth mentioning that the decree authorizes the army and police to undertake necessary procedures to combat terrorism in order to preserve the safety of citizens and public properties across the nation.

The state of emergency was first imposed in April 2017 after two terrorist Church bombings killed 47 people. A decree to lengthen the emergency was issued in October and extended again in January and April. According to the Egyptian constitution, a state of emergency cannot exceed six months from its date of declaration and decrees imposing or extending it should be approved by the parliament.

Central Asia

- **India's Transport Minister Visits Tajikistan**

India's Minister for Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Road Transport & Highways and Shipping Mr. Nitin Gadkari visited Tajikistan to participate in the high level global conference on "International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028", 20-21 June 2018. UN and the Government of

²² Reuters https://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKBN1JH214-OZATP?utm_source=Media+Review+for+June+22%2C+2018&utm_campaign=Media+Review+for+June+22%2C+2018&utm_medium=email

²³ Ahram online English: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/305345/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-to-extend-state-of-emergency-for-three-month.aspx>

Tajikistan jointly organized the Conference to discuss key water related issues of sustainable development goals adopted by UN member countries.²⁴

During the visit, Mr. Gadkari held talks with Tajikistan's Foreign Minister Sirodjidin Muhridin and the two leaders emphasized the need to give further impetus to the ongoing bilateral cooperation in various fields and to enhance mutual cooperation in the area of sustainable water development.

Central Asia is in India's neighbourhood and Tajikistan is a strategic partner. The region is landlocked and lack of direct land connectivity has affected trade with the republics. India is making investments in Chabahar Port of Iran. Addressing the Indian Community at the inauguration of the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre at the Indian Embassy in Dushanbe, the Minister said the opening up of the Chabahar Port would make the CIS countries more accessible. He said that India is trying to make Chabahar operational by 2019.²⁵

China

- **Xi urges breaking new ground in major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics**

Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for efforts to break new ground in major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, with the guidance of the thought on diplomacy of socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era.

In an address at the Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs held in Beijing on 23-24 June, Xi underscored the importance of keeping in mind both internal and international imperatives, focusing on realizing Chinese nation's rejuvenation and promoting human progress, and making contributions to the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

He also urged the efforts to firmly safeguard China's sovereignty, security and development interests, take an active part in leading the reform of the global governance system, and build a more complete network of global partnerships, so that new advances will be made in major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics to create a favorable environment for, and make due contributions to, building a moderately prosperous society and a great modern socialist country in all aspects.²⁶

- **4th International Day of Yoga in Beijing**

The 4th International Day of Yoga celebrations began with the Curtain Raiser event at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Headquarters on 16 June 2018 in Beijing and continued for a week, concluding with the signature event on 21st June at India House, Beijing. During this period, Embassy of India also organized a highly popular Yoga event on 16 June at the Longfu Temple in Langfang city (Hebei) and a special Yoga workshop on breathing (16-17 June) and diabetes (June 18) at the Embassy's Culture Centre in Beijing. All the activities saw enthusiastic participation from Chinese Yoga lovers and practitioners.²⁷

- **China to get tough with environmental data manipulation**

²⁴ Press Information Bureau, Government of India, "Shri Nitin Gadkari to attend conference on "International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028" in Tajikistan," 19 June 2018, <http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1535850>

²⁵ Press Information Bureau, Government of India, "Shri Nitin Gadkari Says India Trying to Make Chabahar Port in Iran Operational by 2019 Inaugurates Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre at Dushanbe," 22 June 2018, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/pmreleases.aspx?mincode=46>

²⁶ http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-06/24/content_8069364.htm

²⁷ <http://indianembassybeijing.in/4th-International-day-of-yoga-2018.php>

China's top environmental watchdog on 24 June said that it will impose tough penalties on people who manipulate or falsify environmental monitoring data, with criminal liability in severe cases. The Ministry of Ecology and Environment has a zero-tolerance policy for such deceptive practices and will strengthen inspections and punishment for violators, said a statement on its website.

The statement came after a court in Jinzhong, Shanxi province, sentenced five people on May 30 - including the former head of environmental protection in Linfen, Shanxi - to prison sentences of six months to two years for tampering with air quality monitoring equipment and falsifying data.²⁸

- **AIIB investments top 4.2 billion USD in 2017: report**

Investments in projects and funds by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) surpassed 4.2 billion U.S. dollars in 2017. The figure was a sharp increase from 1.7 billion U.S. dollars of investments a year earlier as the bank funded 23 approved projects in sectors including transport, energy and telecommunication, up from 8 projects in 2016. Net profit of the bank in 2017 came in at 252 million U.S. dollars, up from 167 million U.S. dollars a year earlier, according to the report. The report identified the bank's thematic priorities as sustainable infrastructure, cross-border connectivity and private capital mobilization.²⁹

- **People's Bank of China change to aid small businesses**

China's central bank announced on 24 June that it is cutting the cash required to be held in reserve in commercial banks by one-half percentage point starting July 5, a measure designed to make it easier to lend to small and micro sized companies.³⁰

- **China and Kenya forging ahead with cooperation**

China and Kenya had agreed to enhance pragmatic cooperation and promote bilateral ties during chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Wang Yang's visit to Kenya from June 16 to 19, 2018. During his meeting with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta on June 19, Wang called on both countries to deepen political mutual trust and build synergy of their development strategies. He also called for firmer support to each other on issues concerning their core interests and promotion of high-level cooperation in other sectors and intensifies coordination on regional and international affairs. Kenyatta welcomed efforts to expand cooperation in areas such as investment, economy and trade and tourism to further strengthen the comprehensive strategic partnership.³¹

- **China's 1st nuclear-powered icebreaker in the pipeline**

China National Nuclear Corporation opened public bidding for the construction of China's first nuclear-powered icebreaker support ship on June 21, 2018. The nuclear-powered icebreaker will facilitate China's maritime trade through the polar region and provide electricity.

According to military expert and TV commentator Song Zhongping, plan to build the first nuclear-powered icebreaker is part of the preparation for building nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. He also added that similar technology can be applied to other military vessels as well. It was preceded by a statement of China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation (CSIC) in February 2018 to "speed up the process of making technological breakthroughs in nuclear-powered aircraft carriers" in its effort to modernise and enhance the naval capability of China.³²

²⁸ <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201806/25/WS5b303e88a3103349141de7bb.html>

²⁹ http://www.china.org.cn/business/2018-06/24/content_53271705.htm

³⁰ <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0625/c90000-9474208.html>

³¹ "China and Kenya forging ahead with cooperation", *The China Daily*, June 22, 2018, <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201806/22/WS5b2c9ad1a3103349141ddcf2.html>.

³² "China's 1st nuclear-powered icebreaker in the pipeline", *The People's Daily*, June 25, 2018, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0625/c90000-9474398.html>.

- China’s military to lead coast guard to better defend sovereignty**
 On June 22, 2018, the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of China adopted a decision to establish a marine police corps under the Chinese People’s Armed Police Force to guard China’s marine rights and function as a law enforcement body. The Chinese coast guard was previously administered by the State Oceanic Administration. The leadership will be transferred from oceanic authorities to the army on July 1, 2018. This will put the Chinese coast guard to be more involved in military drills and daily exercises with the PLA Navy, according to a military expert and TV commentator Song Zhongping. Song added that the coast guard ships would be equipped with small diameter cannons instead of water cannon and the crews will also carry fire arms.³³
- Chinese enterprise makes clean water available in Ghana**
 On June 20, 2018, Xinhuanet.com reported that the Jiangxi Zhongmei Engineering Construction Company has dug 1,000 wells in Ghana to provide water for villagers. In November 2015, the Chinese government made the decision to help dig 1,000 wells in 832 villages across six provinces in Ghana to solve water problem.³⁴

European Union

- Prime Ministers of Visegrad Countries to Skip EU Migration Mini-Summit**
 Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said that the Prime Ministers of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia would not attend an EU mini-summit on migration to be held in Brussels 24 June 2018. Prime Minister Orban said after the meeting with Prime Ministers of Poland, Mateusz Morawiecki, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Andrej Babiš, Prime Minister of Slovakia, Peter Pellegrini and Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz. EU member states are divided on the migration issues and the V4 and Austria have put a united front on migration.³⁵ European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker conveyed mini-summit to discuss migration on 24 June 2018. Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte put forward a ‘European Multilevel Strategy for Migration’ which would overtake the Dublin agreement at the summit.³⁶
- Eurozone Agreed to End Greek Bailout**
 Eurozone Finance Ministers negotiated to end to an eight-year bailout for Greece. It was reported that debt relief and a cash payout would be part of an exit deal. European creditors would grant Greece a final payment of €15 billion. Greece would also receive a decade maturity extension on certain loans. European Economy Commissioner Pierre Moscovici said, “I’d like to explain the significance of what we’re witnessing this evening: this is not something routine, it’s exceptional and it’s historic.” He added, “The Greek crisis ends here tonight.” Greek Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos said: “It took a bit longer than we expected, but ended in a very good way ... To make this worthwhile we have to make sure that the Greek people see concrete results ... they need to feel the change in their own pockets.”³⁷

³³ “China’s military to lead coast guard to better defend sovereignty”, *The People’s Daily*, June 25, 2018, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0625/c90000-9474212.html>.

³⁴ “Chinese enterprise makes clean water available in Ghana”, *The People’s Daily*, June 22, 2018, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0622/c90000-9474098.html>.

³⁵ V4 PMs to skip EU migration mini-summit: Hungary's Orban, Radio Poland, June 21, 2018, <http://www.thenews.pl/1/10/Artykul/369449,V4-PMs-to-skip-EU-migration-minisummit-Hungarys-Orban>

³⁶ David M. Herszenhorn, Jacopo Barigazzi and Andrew Gray, Italy presents migration plan at emergency EU mini-summit, POLITICO, June 24, 2018, <https://www.politico.eu/article/giuseppe-conte-italy-migration-plan-at-emergency-eu-mini-summit/>

³⁷ Eurozone agrees on plan to end Greek bailout, DW, June 21, 2018, <http://www.dw.com/en/eurozone-agrees-on-plan-to-end-greek-bailout/a-44342315>

- **EU Retaliatory Tariffs on US Goods**

The EU retaliatory tariffs on US goods have come into effect on 22 June, 2018. The EU tariffs have been imposed on products such as bourbon whiskey, motorcycles and orange juice. Addressing the Irish Parliament in Dublin, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said, “we will do what we have to do to rebalance and safeguard” the EU.³⁸

- **EAM Sushma Swaraj Visit to European Countries**

External Affairs Minister (EAM), Sushma Swaraj, visited four European countries - Italy, France, Luxembourg and Belgium from 17 to 23 June 2018. During her visit to Italy, EAM Swaraj called on Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte and met with Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, Enzo Moavero Milanesi. She visited Paris from 18-19 June 2018 and met her counterpart, Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe & Foreign Affairs of France. She also called on the French President Macron. EAM Sushma Swaraj visited Luxembourg on 19-20 June 2018. It was the first ever visit to Luxembourg by an External Affairs Minister from India. During her visit to Belgium, EAM Swaraj met with Jean Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission on 20 June 2018. They discussed India-EU bilateral relations. She also met Mr. Antonio Tajani, President of the EU Parliament. She along with Geoffrey Charles Van Orden, President of the Delegation for Relations with India led the International Day of Yoga celebrations at the European Parliament on 21 June 2018.³⁹

- **Sweden Democrats call for referendum on Swedish EU membership after 2018 election**

The anti-immigration Sweden Democrats (SD) have called for Sweden to hold a referendum on the country's EU membership after the 2018 Swedish general election. SD party leader Jimmie Åkesson told newspaper Dagens Industri that the EU is a "large web of corruption where no one has control over anything". The Swedish nationalists want Sweden to follow the UK's example and leave the EU, and promise they will push for a referendum on the matter in the next mandate period. Recent polls suggest the Sweden Democrats could be the second largest party in the autumn 2018 general election, but even if the vote plays out as such, they would still have a hard time pushing a referendum through parliament. None of the other biggest parties in Sweden support holding a vote on Swedish EU membership.⁴⁰

- **Basque threat of 'second front' for independence**

On Monday (18 June 2018) 175,000 people in Casco Viejo neighbourhood formed a 200km human chain demanding the Basque country be given a "right to decide" in its future relations with Madrid. The move comes over a week after Spain's prime minister Mariano Rajoy stepped down amid widespread corruption charges within his conservative Popular Party (PP). Spanish socialist leader Pedro Sanchez had managed to cobble together a coalition of smaller groups, including Basque nationalists and Catalan separatists, to oust Rajoy from office in a no-confidence vote. It also comes after the Basque Eta separatist group officially disbanded and apologised for killing some 800 people over its four-decade armed struggle. The response from Madrid over the Basque demonstration appeared more subdued. Spanish minister of territorial policy, Meritxell Batet, in a Spanish radio

³⁸ EU tariffs on US goods come into force, BBC, 22 June 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-44567636>

³⁹ Ministry of External Affairs, Visit of External Affairs Minister to Belgium (June 20-22, 2018), June 23, 2018, http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/30006/Visit_of_External_Affairs_Minister_to_Belgium_June_2022_2018

⁴⁰ The Local, 18 June 2018, <https://www.thelocal.se/20180618/sweden-democrats-call-for-referendum-on-swedish-eu-membership-after-2018-election>

interview said the government was not opposed to the demonstration and is open to dialogue with everyone.⁴¹

- **Brexit: EU is getting ready for no-deal, says Jean-Claude Juncker**

The EU needs to be realistic about the dangerous state of the Brexit negotiations and is preparing to deploy its trillion-pound budget to cushion the bloc from the prospect of a no-deal scenario, the European commission president has warned. With the two sides still far apart on the “hardest issues”, just days from a crunch leaders’ summit in Brussels, Jean-Claude Juncker told the Irish parliament on Thursday (21 June 2018) he was stepping up preparations for a breakdown in talks, and even drafting plans aimed at keeping the peace in Northern Ireland. The problem of avoiding a hard border with the Republic – said by the Irish taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, to be akin to a “riddle wrapped in an enigma” – is threatening to thwart all attempts to make progress on a wider deal. With Theresa May refusing to countenance what Juncker described as the bloc’s “bespoke and workable solution”, of the Northern Ireland effectively staying in the customs union and single market, it was crucial for the 27 EU member states to prepare for the worst outcome, the commission president said.⁴²

- Italy presents migration plan at emergency EU mini-summit Arriving at an emergency EU mini-summit on migration, Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said he would put forward a “completely new proposal” for managing Europe’s most divisive political issue. Conte said the proposal, the “European Multilevel Strategy for Migration,” would “completely overtake” the EU’s Dublin agreement on handling asylum cases, which EU member countries have been trying to reach agreement on reforming for years. Such an ambitious and comprehensive approach stood in marked contrast to the priorities of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who pushed for the mini-summit in Brussels to try to ease severe tensions with her Bavarian coalition partners. On her way into the summit, Merkel made clear she was looking for quick agreements among small blocs of countries to avoid having to seek a deal acceptable to all of the EU’s 28 members. Italy’s new populist government, however, has made clear that it will not abide leaders focusing on Germany’s main priority — the movement of migrants across the EU’s internal borders — without addressing longstanding Italian concerns over how to better manage the initial arrivals of refugees. The text of the Italian proposal calls for “shared responsibility among member states” when it comes to handling migrants who arrive by sea at the EU’s external borders. “We can’t take everyone to Italy and Spain,” the document states, envisaging “reception centers in several European countries.”⁴³

- **EU leaders still in search of migration plan**

Sixteen EU states presented a united front on migration in Brussels on Sunday (24 June), but tensions remain, with no solutions on paper for how to deal with people seeking international protection, their movements inside Europe, or plans to prevent them from taking boats from Libya. “There is no plan, only proposals from the ones and the others,” admitted French president Emmanuel Macron. Leaders appeared to agree on the need to shore up external borders, expand the EU’s border agency Frontex, and increase efforts in African states to prevent people from reaching Libya to take boats towards Italy. The discussion, noted Macron, ruled out “solutions that are not consistent with our values or international rights,” such as pushing back refugees. The meeting, which did not deliver on declared solutions, came as some 300 people remain stranded on the NGO rescue boat

⁴¹ EU Observer, 18 June 2018, <https://euobserver.com/beyond-brussels/142109+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=in&client=firefox-b-ab>

⁴² The Guardian, 21 June 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jun/21/eu-is-getting-ready-for-no-deal-brexit-says-jean-claude-juncker>

⁴³ Politico, 24 June 2018, <https://www.politico.eu/article/giuseppe-conte-italy-migration-plan-at-emergency-eu-mini-summit/>

Lifeline and a merchant ship off the Libyan coast, given neither has been assigned a port of safety. It also came after proposals announced on Saturday (23 June 2018) by Macron and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez to set up closed detention centres and to sanction EU states that refused to host asylum seekers.⁴⁴

- **President Ram Nath Kovind meets Greece PM & President; discusses issues of mutual interests**

President Ram Nath Kovind visited Greece on 16-18 June 2018. He held talks with the top leadership of Greece and discussed ways to enhance political, economic and cultural cooperation between the two ancient civilisations. President Kovind, the first Indian president to travel to Greece in 11 years, met with President Prokypis Pavlopoulos and the two sides held delegation-level talks during which they discussed various issues of mutual interests. During his meeting, President Kovind emphasised the age-old civilisational ties between the two nations. He said India and Greece shared values of democracy, rule of law and multi-cultural ethos, and these have added depth to their bilateral and multilateral engagements. He also said India was keen to deepen the ongoing co-operation with Greece especially in political and economic fields. He stated that bilateral trade between the two countries of USD 530 million was below potential and more efforts must be made to expand and diversify trade between them. He also apprised the Greek delegation of the steps taken by India to improve business climate in the country and said that India wished to collaborate with the Greek companies to become partners in the growth story of India. India also thanked Greece for its support for its candidature for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council and for membership to the Nuclear Suppliers Group.⁴⁵

East Asia /South-East Asia/ Oceania

Korean Peninsula and Japan

- **Kim Jong-un visits China for the third time**

On June 19, 2018, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un made his third visit to China. During his two day visit Chairman Kim met Chinese President Xi Jinping. During their meeting Kim and Xi reaffirmed the states' alliance and pledged to boost "strategic cooperation". According to KCNA, "in a one-on-one meeting between the leaders of North Korea and China, they exchanged views on the current state of affairs and pending international issues, and they discussed boosting bilateral strategic cooperation under the current new circumstances."⁴⁶

- **South Korea and US suspends joint military exercise**

On June 19, 2018, South Korean defense ministry announced that Seoul and Washington have decided to suspend the Ulchi Freedom Guardian (UFG) exercise slated for August. The ministry also said that there is no decision yet regarding other allied training exercises. The White House said that the combined exercises are expected to be "on pause" should the North deliver on its denuclearization commitment. "Those conversations are ongoing at this point. As long as North Korea continues to act in good

⁴⁴ EU Observer, 24 June 2018, <https://euobserver.com/migration/142175>

⁴⁵ The Indian Express, 18 June 2018, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/president-ram-nath-kovind-meets-greece-pm-president-discusses-issues-of-mutual-interests-5222870/>

⁴⁶ "Kim, Xi discussed strategic cooperation: NK media", The Korea Times, June 21, 2018, www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2018/06/356_251074.html

faith, then we expect those things to be on pause," White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders told reporters.⁴⁷

On June 24, 2018, South Korean defense ministry announced that, Seoul and Washington agreed to put on hold the joint Korea Marine Exchange Program (KMEP) training exercise."The KMEP is a small-scale military drill jointly held by South Korean and U.S. Marine Corps," the South Korean Marine Corps said in a statement.⁴⁸

Following the announcement of the suspension of the UFG exercise, South Korean Defense Ministry on June 21, 2018 announced the postponement of its independent military exercise slated to begin later this month in efforts to ensure the smooth progress of the ongoing denuclearization and normalization talks with North Korea. This is the first time the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) has decided to postpone the annual Taegeuk command-post exercise, held in May or June each year, since it started in 1995.⁴⁹

- **South Korean President Moon Jae-in visits Russia**

On June 21-23, South Korean President Moon Jae-in made a state visit to Russia. During the visit he had a Summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin. During their Summit President Moon and Putin have vowed to speed up preparations for three-party economic cooperation between the two Koreas and Russia. It was also announced that South Korea and Russia will begin the process for negotiating a free trade agreement (FTA) in the service and investment sectors. They also announced that jointly would conduct joint research focusing on economic and technical feasibility of linking railways, gas pipelines and electrical grids of the three nations. Moon's trip to Russia is the first state visit by a South Korean president since Kim Dae-jung in 1999.⁵⁰

- **Two Korea's agreed to hold family reunion in August**

On June 22, 2018, during the Red Cross talks held in Panmunjom, the two Korea's agreed to hold reunions of families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War from Aug. 20 to 26 at Mount Geumgang in North Korea. The reunions will be resumed almost three years since the last in October 2015. June 22, Red Cross talks were the first since October 2010, when the meetings were suspended due to the North's shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in South Korea. The last meeting between working-level officials was in September 2015.⁵¹

- **Japan Cancels missile evacuation drills: Says North Korea threat 'not imminent'**

On June 21, 2018, Japanese government announced that it is cancelling missile evacuation drills planned as North Korea increases its engagement with the outside world. Referring to developments like North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's recent summit with U.S. President Donald Trump, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said, "unlike last year, when North Korea was frequently test-launching missiles, we are not facing an imminent threat." Drills had been scheduled in nine prefectures for fiscal 2018. The central government began the drills in 2017 in cooperation with municipal governments. It will consider resuming them should the situation in North Korea deteriorate once again.⁵²

⁴⁷ "South Korea, US suspend Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercise ", The Korea Times, June 19, 2018, www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2018/06/205_250888.html

⁴⁸ "S. Korea, US suspend joint marine exercises ", The Korea Times, June 24, 2018, www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2018/06/356_251184.html

⁴⁹ "South Korean military halts own exercise after UFG suspension", The Korea Times, June 21, 2018, www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2018/06/205_251067.html

⁵⁰ "South Korea, Russia agree on free trade talks, economic cooperation with North Korea ", The Korea Times, June 24, 2018, www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2018/06/120_251121.html

⁵¹ "Koreas to hold family reunions Aug. 20-26", The Korea Times, June 22, 2018, www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2018/06/356_251120.html

⁵² "Missile evacuation drills no longer needed, Japan says", The Nikkei Asia Review, June 22, 2018, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/North-Korea-at-a-crossroads/Missile-evacuation-drills-no-longer-needed-Japan-says>

(ASEAN, Malaysia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines)

- **President Duterte wants China out of the West Philippine Sea, without going to War**

Speaking on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in Pasay City on June 18, 2018, President Duterte stated that while he wants China out of the Philippine-claimed areas in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea), he would not declare war against Beijing over the maritime row. President Duterte, who has been accused of not doing enough to assert the Philippines' maritime rights, said he was not ready to sacrifice the lives of soldiers and policemen for a war he could not win. Rather he would like to continue to keep the channels of communication open with Beijing and strike deals such as a possible joint exploration with China which would be mutually beneficial.⁵³

- **Thailand to co-host the 3rd Ministerial Meeting of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD III)**

The Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand and Japan will co-host the Third Ministerial Meeting of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD III) on June 27, 2018 in Bangkok. Thailand supports the Two-State Solution and the peace process in the Middle East, Thailand has been an active member of CEAPAD since the First Ministerial Meeting in Tokyo in February 2013. CEAPAD serves as a forum for East Asian countries and international organisations to coordinate the sharing of experiences and knowledge, as well as the assistance cooperation with Palestine for its ongoing development efforts. CEAPAD has contributed to the socio-economic development and capacity building of Palestine, in line with the Palestinian needs and East Asian countries' resources. In this regard, the CEAPAD forum plays a useful role in creating an environment conducive to achieving lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the Two-State Solution.⁵⁴

- **Election Monitoring Organisations non-participation in the Upcoming Cambodian Elections**

Smaller parties running for the upcoming July 29, national elections in Cambodia have complained on the decision of the non-participation by election monitoring organisations such as the Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (Comfrel) and the Neutral and Impartial Committee for Free Elections in Cambodia, (Nifec). These organisations cited a lack of volunteers resulting from the fear of being accused by the government of being part of a "colour revolution" or rebel group, as their reason for their non-participation. Som Sorida, the deputy secretary-general of the NEC stated that each party has to supply independent monitors at the stations, with the registration for election agents to begin on June 19 and end on July 5. With nearly 23,000 polling stations nationwide for the elections, Som Sorida agreed it could be an obstacle for some parties. And with election monitoring groups declining to participate it leaves only the National Election Committee (NEC) to oversee voting at a large number of the polling stations.⁵⁵

- **Malaysia to Reassess its troops presence in Saudi Arabia**

⁵³ Alexis Romero, "Duterte wants China out of West Philippine Sea, but no war", *The Philippines Star*, June 19, 2018, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/06/19/1825891/duterte-wants-china-out-west-philippine-sea-no-war>, accessed on June 19, 2018.

⁵⁴ "Thailand to Host the Third Ministerial Meeting of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand*, June 18, 2018, <http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/news3/6886/90621-Thailand-to-Host-the-Third-Ministerial-Meeting-of.html>, accessed on June 19, 2018.

⁵⁵ Ben Sokhean and Niem Chheng, "Smaller parties voice concerns ahead of polls", *The Phnom Penh Post*, June 19, 2018, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/smaller-parties-voice-concerns-ahead-polls>, accessed on June 19, 2018.

Malaysian Defence Minister Mohamad Sabu said in a statement on June 20, that the government is reassessing the decision of the previous Barisan Nasional (BN) administration to Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM) troops in Saudi Arabia. The ATM team is on standby to evacuate Malaysians from Yemen. According to the Minister, Malaysia has never been involved in the attack on Yemen, which is also a Muslim country. Nevertheless, the ATM presence in Saudi Arabia has indirectly mired Malaysia in the Middle East conflict. Mr Mohamad said Malaysia had always practised a neutral policy, and that the country does not side with the political ideology of any of the world's superpowers. Former defence minister Hishammuddin Hussein, from the previous BN government, said in October last year that Malaysian troop would remain in Saudi Arabia to provide humanitarian assistance and contribute to rebuilding efforts in Yemen if required.⁵⁶

- **PM Chan-o-Cha meeting with British PM May**

The Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-Cha who is on his Europe visit met with British PM Theresa May at Downing Street on June 20, 2018. Both leaders welcomed the long history of friendship between the UK and Thailand, agreeing on the importance of reinvigorating their strategic partnership on issues of mutual interest, such as trade and security. They also discussed the importance of the international community continuing to come together to counter violent extremism and enhance cyber security, and to take forward efforts to tackle the illegal wildlife trade. The British Prime Minister urged continued progress towards free and open elections in Thailand in line with international standards, including restrictions on political parties being lifted at an early stage.⁵⁷

Myanmar

- **State Counsellor Separately Receives Special Envoy of UNSG, European Commission Delegation.**

State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener, Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General on Myanmar at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw to hear the envoy's feedback at the conclusion of her first visit. During the meeting, the Special Envoy shared her experiences and general views after discussions with government ministries and civil society organisations as well as affected communities in Rakhine State. The Special Envoy expressed her recognition of the Myanmar Government's efforts on Rakhine State, including preparations for repatriation and resettlement process, and the complex and sensitive situation of Rakhine State. She also underlined the necessity to create conducive environment for returnees due to deep rooted division of the two communities, importance of freedom of movement and security, and urgency to implement the MoU signed with UNDP and UNHCR.⁵⁸

- **Refugees from Myanmar more than doubled last year to 1.2 million: UN**

A record 68.5 million people have been forced flee their homes due to war, violence and persecution, notably in places like Myanmar and Syria, the UN said. By the end of 2017, the number was nearly three million higher than the previous year and showed a 50-

⁵⁶“Presence of Malaysian troops in Saudi Arabia being re-evaluated, says KL defence minister”, *The Straits Times*, June 20, 2018, <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/presence-of-malaysian-troops-in-saudi-arabia-being-re-evaluated-says-kl-defence>, accessed on June 20, 2018.

⁵⁷“PM meeting with Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-Cha of Thailand: 20 June 2018”, *Prime Minister Office*, June 20, 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-meeting-with-prime-minister-prayut-chan-o-cha-of-thailand-20-june-2018>, accessed on June 25, 2018.

⁵⁸ STATE COUNSELLOR SEPARATELY RECEIVES SPECIAL ENVOY OF UNSG, EUROPEAN COMMISSION DELEGATION, 21 June 2018, <http://www.statecounsellor.gov.mm/en/node/1989>

percent increase from the 42.7 million uprooted from their homes a decade ago, according to a report by the UN refugee agency. The current figure is equivalent to the entire population of Thailand, and the number of people forcibly displaced equates to one in every 110 persons worldwide, it said.⁵⁹

- **Migrant workers in Thailand warned to legalise**

The government urged Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand to accelerate their legalisation efforts to meet the June 30 deadline since the Thai government is to implement harsher laws on illegal foreign workers. “On the Thai side, over 800 Myanmar citizens still need to prove their citizenship. And for those who have half-finished the legalisation requirements, their documents will be issued by Thailand,” U San Maung Oo, labor attaché of the Myanmar embassy told The Myanmar Times. He said embassy had issued Certificates of Identity (CIs) to 180,000 Myanmar migrants in Thailand.⁶⁰

- **Government appeals for more objectivity on Rakhine issue**

Myanmar called on the international community, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), to view the situation in northern Rakhine State more objectively and to be part of the solution. The government made the appeal during the general debate at the High Commissioner Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva on 20th June. “Naming and shaming cannot help resolve the situation. It can only further inflame the current tension in Rakhine,” said U Myint Thu, permanent secretary of Foreign Affairs, and leader of the Myanmar delegation to meeting.⁶¹

Oceania

- **Australia signs contract to deliver undersea cables to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands**

On 19 June 2018, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade formally announced that the Australian Government will partner with telecommunications company Vocus to manage the construction of high-speed undersea telecommunications cables to Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Solomon Islands. “Awarding the \$136.6 million contract to delivery partner Vocus is a major milestone and signals the start of the physical installation of the Coral Sea Cable System.” Australia will deliver and majority-fund the cables, with a financial co-contribution from both PNG and Solomon Islands. Australia's strong support for this project is a reflection of “our enduring commitment to the Pacific, where we work with partners to support the region's stability, security and prosperity” said Julie Bishop. The Coral Sea Cable System is scheduled for completion by the end of 2019.⁶²

- **Australia's Reaction to United States' resignation from the UN Human Rights Council**

On 20 June 2018, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade issued a media release expressing Australia's disappointment over the decision of the United States to resign from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). The statement pointed out that Australia shares many of the concerns held by the US about the UNHRC, particularly its anti-Israel bias, and have consistently supported efforts to address other

⁵⁹ Refugees from Myanmar more than doubled last year to 1.2 million :UN, 20 June 2018, <http://www.mizzima.com/news-international/refugees-myanmar-more-doubled-last-year-12-million-un>

⁶⁰ Migrant workers in Thailand warned to legalise, 22 June 2018, <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/migrant-workers-thailand-warned-legalise.html>

⁶¹ Government appeals for more objectivity on Rakhine issue, 22 June 2018, <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/government-appeals-more-objectivity-rakhine-issue.html>

⁶² https://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2018/jb_mr_180619.aspx

matters of contention. It noted that “given our commitment to a strong multilateral human rights system and to advancing human rights globally, Australia will continue to work constructively along with other members, including the US as a principled, pragmatic and consultative member, to shape the work of the Council and uphold the international rules-based order”.⁶³

- **Australia announced Humanitarian assistance to Bangladesh**

In a joint media release on 20 June 2018, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop and Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, announced on the World Refugee Day that the Australian Government will provide additional humanitarian assistance to meet the urgent needs of Rohingya people in Bangladesh. The additional assistance will support the delivery of food, shelter, health and protection services through the United Nations Refugee Agency, the International Organisation for Migration and the World Food Program. The additional funding brings Australia's total humanitarian response to the Rohingya crisis to \$70 million since September 2017.⁶⁴

- **PNG set to join China's Belt and Road**

Papua New Guinea will become the second Pacific nation to join to China's massive Belt and Road Initiative infrastructure program as the Prime Minister Peter O'Neill is expected to sign the strategic and economic program during his week-long visit to China, which includes a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping. PNG Prime Minister Peter O'Neill who is in Beijing accompanied by a large government and business delegation, confirmed ahead of his trip that he would join East Timor as the only countries in the Pacific region to formally endorse the program, paving the way for more Chinese infrastructure development.⁶⁵ “China's One Belt One Road initiative offers great potential for Papua New Guinea's interaction in the global economy. China is playing a very important role globally, it is the second largest economy in the world, and we cannot sit back and isolate our economy. Our engagement with China will further open up Papua New Guinea's trade and investment opportunities”.⁶⁶

- **New Zealand and EU formally launch free trade talks**

Minister for Trade and Export Growth David Parker and European Union Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström formally launched negotiations for a free trade agreement between New Zealand and the EU. “The start of negotiations is an important milestone in New Zealand's trade and economic relations with the EU,” David Parker said. The first round of negotiations is expected to take place in Brussels in July. The agreement once signed would serve as a model for progressive and inclusive trade.⁶⁷

North America

Canada

- **Kanishka bombing was Canada's single-worst act of terror: Trudeau**

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said the 1985 Air India bombing was the “single-worst terrorist attack” in the country's history as he paid tribute to the 329 victims of the Kanishka Flight 182 which was blown off mid-air. “The Air India bombing remains

⁶³ https://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2018/jb_mr_180620.aspx

⁶⁴ https://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2018/jb_mr_180620a.aspx

⁶⁵ <https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/looking-north-png-signs-on-to-china-s-belt-and-road-initiative-20180621-p4zmyv.html>

⁶⁶ <https://postcourier.com.pg/trade-investment-employment-opportunities-come-pms-official-state-visit-china/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealand-and-eu-formally-launch-free-trade-talks>

the single worst terrorist attack in Canada's history. This horrific act of malice and destruction left families and friends grieving the loss of loved ones, and brought pain that will never completely go away," he said, marking the National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism. Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan said that only one person responsible has been brought to justice. "The investigation will not be completed until those have been brought to justice," he said.⁶⁸

- **Canadian troops arrive in Mali to boost UN peacekeeping mission**

A small advance team of Canadian troops arrived in Mali to take part in the peacekeeping mission, considered the UN's deadliest. The group will be followed in the coming weeks by the rest of the Canadian contingent. The first deployment consists of "the theater activation team, whose job is to assist with logistics and coordinate transport and equipment," said a spokesman for Canada's defence ministry, adding that the mission "is planned from August 2018 to July 2019." In March, Ottawa announced its decision to deploy for a year an air support force including two Chinook helicopters for medical evacuations and transportation, as well as four Griffon armed helicopters and a contingent of about 250 soldiers. The first group was accompanied by the Canadian chief of the defence staff, General Jonathan Vance, who held talks in the capital Bamako, Canadian media reported.⁶⁹

- **Canadian officials view Ireland as stiff competition for UN Security Council seat: documents**

When it comes to Canada's bid for a seat on the UN Security Council, it seems officials have been sizing up the playing field and might view Ireland as stiff competition. That's according to briefing memos prepared by Global Affairs Canada that provided a brief assessment of Ireland's competing bid for one of two rotating seats on the council. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau campaigned on a pledge to seek one of the two seats as part of his promise that "Canada is back" on the world stage but the release of the briefing notes comes amid reports that Canada is "dialing back" its efforts to win the seat and increasingly views the bid as a low priority. Ireland won its last bid for a seat in 2001 by a landslide. Canada withdrew in defeat from its bid in 2010, and the wins fell to Germany and Portugal. The slate for the 2020 election is highly competitive and experts say trying to split the European vote will likely prove a steep wall for the officials leading the Canadian campaign to overcome.⁷⁰

The United States

- **US Senate passes bill seeking enhanced defence ties with India**

The US Senate today passed with an overwhelming majority a \$716 billion defence bill which among other things seeks to strengthen ties with America's 'Major Defence Partner' India. The US recognised India as a "Major Defence Partner" in 2016, a designation that allows India to buy more advanced and sensitive technologies from America at par with that of its closest allies and partners, and ensures enduring cooperation into the future.⁷¹

⁶⁸ PTI, "Kanishka bombing was Canada's single-worst act of terror: Trudeau," <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/kanishka-bombing-was-canadas-single-worst-act-of-terror-trudeau/article24247782.ece>, Accessed on 25 June 2018.

⁶⁹ AFP, "Canadian troops arrive in Mali to boost UN peacekeeping mission," <https://www.enca.com/africa/canadian-troops-arrive-in-mali-to-boost-un-peacekeeping-mission>, Accessed on 25 July 2018.

⁷⁰ Amanda Connolly, "Canadian officials view Ireland as stiff competition for UN Security Council seat: documents," <https://globalnews.ca/news/4291342/canada-security-council-seat-united-nations-2020-ireland/>, Accessed on 25 June 2018.

⁷¹ PTI, "US Senate passes bill seeking enhanced defence ties with India," <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/us-senate-passes-bill-seeking-enhanced-defence-ties-with-india/articleshow/64644620.cms>, Accessed on 19 June 2018.

- **Amid trade war, India offers to buy 1,000 planes, more oil from US**

Amid the ongoing trade war + , India is seeking to buy peace with the US by offering to order nearly 1,000 civilian aircraft over the next 7-8 years and step up oil and gas purchase from the world's largest trader. This was conveyed by commerce minister Suresh Prabhu to his US counterpart during their talks as both sides try to find solutions to problems on the trade front. India is trying to convince the US that its reciprocal tariffs are part of a WTO-sanctioned right after the US took the first step with steel and aluminium duties. India is keen to see some resolution before the 2+2 talks + between foreign minister Sushma Swaraj and defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman and their US counterparts - secretary of state Mike Pompeo and defence secretary James Mattis, respectively - in Washington on July 6. India has calculated that it will be paying about \$5 billion a year for aircraft and about \$4 billion for purchase of oil and gas from the US. This is apart from defence purchases + where India is now looking at buying 12 more naval surveillance aircraft P8i. India is now the largest owner of these aircraft outside the US. India and the US are working on the next foundational agreement - the communications compatibility and security agreement - which may be inked in the coming months. This comes after the logistics exchange memorandum of agreement was operationalised last year (2017), leaving only the basic exchange and cooperation agreement to be signed between the two countries.⁷²

- **Trump officially declares N. Korea still a threat, despite his claim after historic summit**

President Trump cited an “unusual and extraordinary threat” to U.S. national security as he acted to maintain long-standing economic restrictions on North Korea, including the freezing of any assets in the United States. The official declaration, contained in a notice to Congress, came despite Trump’s assertion this month that his historic summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ended the North’s nuclear weapons threat. Harsh economic restrictions will continue for one year under the order Trump signed. The paperwork keeps in place restrictions first imposed a decade ago by President George W. Bush. The ban on the transfer of any U.S. assets by North Korea’s leaders or its ruling party has been extended or expanded several times by both President Barack Obama and Trump himself in response to North Korean missile tests and other actions. The national emergency that Trump extended allows the government to forbid North Korean leaders from selling or otherwise using any assets they may hold in the United States. It is separate from U.S. sanctions related to North Korean human rights abuses and a long list of international penalties imposed over Pyongyang’s nuclear and ballistic missile testing.⁷³

- **US to give North Korea post-summit timeline with 'asks' soon, official says**

The United States will soon present a timeline to North Korea with "specific asks" of Pyongyang after a historic summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, a senior U.S. defense official said. The official, who spoke to a small group of reporters ahead of a trip to Asia by Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, did not specify details but suggested that the timeline would be rapid enough to make clear Pyongyang's level of commitment. Sect Mattis’ trip there from June 26-28 will be the first by a U.S. defense secretary since 2014, and comes as Sino-U.S. tensions have heightened

⁷² Indrani Bagchi, “Amid trade war, India offers to buy 1,000 planes, more oil from US,” <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/reciprocal-tariffs-a-wto-sanctioned-right-india-to-tell-us/articleshow/64705294.cms>, Accessed on 25 June 2018.

⁷³ Anne Gearan, “Trump officially declares N. Korea still a threat, despite his claim after historic summit,” https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-officially-declares-north-korea-still-a-threat-despite-his-claim-after-historic-summit/2018/06/22/bddfb3b0-7634-11e8-9780-b1dd6a09b549_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.13460daa34ca, Accessed on 25 June 2018.

over trade and China's muscular military posture in the South China Sea. North Korea is expected to be among the top items on Mattis' agenda during his talks with senior Chinese officials. He will then travel to South Korea and end his trip with talks in Japan on June 29.⁷⁴

Mexico

- **Mexico's Hardball Politics Get Even Harder as PRI Fights to Hold Onto Power**

Wielding the power and resources of government, Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party has used some of the nation's most important institutions in an attempt to change the course of the presidential election, according to independent election observers and former party officials. The nation's attorney general, who is appointed by the president, has publicly accused one of the main opposition candidates of serious crimes without offering much evidence. Similarly, decisions by a special court overseeing the election, which was appointed by a PRI-dominated congress, have been roundly criticized. Hardball tactics are nothing new in Mexican politics, but the PRI's abuse of state institutions are a staggering escalation for a party in power. For more than 70 years, the PRI has dominated the nation's political landscape. But now the party appears to be heading toward a searing defeat in the elections next month amid corruption scandals and soaring levels of violence. But for all of its efforts, the gains have been marginal for the governing party, which appears to be limping toward a crushing defeat this July. Its candidate, José Antonio Meade, remains a distant third in polling.⁷⁵

- **Mexican officials are ready to stop helping the US fight terrorism and drug trafficking to get back at Trump**

Mexican legislators proposed ending cooperation with the US on immigration, counterterrorism, and fighting organised crime "as long as President Donald Trump does not act with the respect that migrants deserve." The proposal was made by the Mexican Congress' Permanent Commission, which meets while Congress is in recess, and asks the executive branch to "consider the possibility of withdrawing from any bilateral cooperation scheme" with the US on those issues. Mexican legislators called on their US counterparts to "end the inhumane and criminal action of separating migrant families, taking into account the best interests of the children and giving priority to the respect of human rights." While announcing the proposal, Ernesto Cordero Arroyo, a senator for the conservative National Action Party, said the US "is a partner, allied in diverse causes and a friend that doesn't deserve a government like that of Donald Trump," adding that Mexico would not support a country that "systematically violates human rights and that doesn't have respect for the life and dignity of people."⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Reuters, "US to give North Korea post-summit timeline with 'asks' soon, official says," <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/06/25/us-to-give-north-korea-post-summit-timeline-with-asks-soon--official.html>, Accessed on 25 June 2018.

⁷⁵ Azam Ahmed and Danny Hakim, "Mexico's Hardball Politics Get Even Harder as PRI Fights to Hold Onto Power," <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/24/world/americas/mexico-election-cambridge-analytica.html>, Accessed on 25 June 2018.

⁷⁶ Christopher Woody, "Mexican officials are ready to stop helping the US fight terrorism and drug trafficking to get back at Trump," <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/mexico-officials-propose-end-to-security-cooperation-over-trump-policy-2018-6>, Accessed on 25 June 2018.

Region: Latin America and Caribbean

Cuba

- **India signs 2 MoUs with Cuba to enhance cooperation in various fields**
President Ram Nath Kovind held delegation-level talks with Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel and agreed to enhance cooperation in biotechnology, renewable energy and traditional medicine. President Kovind visited Centro De Ingenera Genetica Biotechnologya and attended a presentation on Cuban Pharma industry. He was received by Dr. Adverdo Martinez, president of Cuba Pharma. Cuba also reiterated its support for India's candidature for a permanent seat in UN Security Council.⁷⁷

Paraguay

- **Incoming Paraguay president Abdo to name his brother Lopez as finance minister**
Incoming Paraguay President Mario Abdo will name his half-brother and former central bank board member Benigno Lopez as finance minister when he is sworn in on August 15, the transition team said. Lopez, a lawyer, ran the landlocked South American country's social security agency under the administration of current President Horacio Cartes. Major changes to Paraguay's economic policy are not expected under Abdo, who is a member of Cartes' conservative Colorado party. Abdo had previously announced that Lopez would play an important role in his government. Future interior minister Juan Ernesto Villamayor defended Abdo's decision to name a family member as finance minister, arguing in broadcast comments that Lopez was qualified for the job. Paraguay's economy has grown under Cartes thanks to a booming agricultural sector and new infrastructure investments, financed in part by the country's first international bonds. Gross domestic product grew 4.3 percent in 2017 and is expected to expand 4.5 percent this year, according to the central bank. Still, the country remains one of the poorest and most unequal in the region.⁷⁸

Suriname

- **India to provide USD 51 million development aid to Suriname**
India will extend a Line of Credit of USD 31 million and a concessional financing of USD 20 million to Suriname as the two countries agreed to strengthen their economic relations and development partnership after President Kovind held talks with his Surinamese counterpart Desire Delano Bouterse. President Kovind, who is on a three-day visit to the Latin American country, announced that India will extend concessional financing of USD 20 million for setting up a solar project to provide clean energy to a cluster of 49 villages in Suriname. India will also extend a Line of Credit of USD 27.5 million to support a power transmission project in Pikin Saron area and another Line of Credit of USD 3.5 million for maintenance of Chetak helicopters. The president also received the Ratification Instrument of Suriname joining the International Solar Alliance from Bouterse. India also agreed to assist Suriname to establish a Centre of Excellence in information technology. A MoU to take forward this project was signed. Besides, the two sides also concluded four MoUs in the fields of elections, diplomatic academies partnership, employment for spouse

⁷⁷ ANI, "India, Cuba to enhance cooperation in various fields," https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/india-cuba-to-enhance-cooperation-in-various-fields-118062300092_1.html, Accessed on 25 June 2018.

⁷⁸ Reuters, "Incoming Paraguay president Abdo to name his brother Lopez as finance minister," <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-paraguay-politics/incoming-paraguay-president-abdo-to-name-his-brother-lopez-as-finance-minister-idUSKBN1JF3BR>, Accessed on 25 June 2018.

of diplomats of the two countries and archives. Suriname invited Indian investment in areas such as agriculture, mining, energy and timber.⁷⁹

Venezuela

- **Venezuela: all change, no change**

In the past fortnight, Venezuela has named a new cabinet, a new head of the central bank and a new board of directors at PDVSA, the dilapidated state-owned company at the heart of the country's monumental collapse in oil production. Sadly for Venezuelans, the new appointees come with the same old ideology, the same political baggage and, in many cases, are simply the same people in different roles. Following his victory in an election widely condemned as a sham, President Nicolás Maduro promised “a new beginning” for his crisis-wracked nation. A cabinet reshuffle was among his first steps. He named Delcy Rodríguez, his firebrand former foreign minister, as vice-president. She takes over from Tareck El Aissami, who becomes economic vice-president and minister for industry and production. Mr Maduro has tasked him with leading an “economic revolution” in a nation on the brink of collapse. In all, Mr Maduro made more than a dozen changes. The powerful defence minister, Vladimir Padrino, and interior minister, Néstor Reverol, are among the few to keep their jobs.⁸⁰

Russia

- **Russia and Germany**

On the cyber attack named “Berserk Bear” on 13 June, Hans-Georg Maassen, head of Germany's BfV domestic intelligence agency, on 19 June said that Russia was probably behind a widespread cyber attack on German energy and electricity providers. Russia has repeatedly denied trying to hack into other countries' infrastructure. Asked to comment on Maassen's accusations, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: “We don't know what he was talking about.” Meanwhile, Maria Zakharova, spokesman for the Russian foreign ministry said that “They should give facts.”⁸¹

- **Russia and OPEC**

On 23 June, Russia joined partner countries in backing an OPEC-led pledge to boost oil production in response to growing global demand. OPEC on 22 June agreed to raise output by one million barrels a day from July. Saudi Arabia, supported by Russia, was strongly in favour of pumping more oil to ease fears of a supply crunch and quiet grumbles about the higher prices in major consumer countries like the United States, China and India. Moscow had long argued for a hike, feeling the pressure from domestic oil companies eager to produce more so they can cash in on the higher prices.⁸²

- **Russia and Ukraine**

On 22 June, Ukraine President Petro Poroshenko signed a decree to enact a recently adopted decision to expand sanctions on Russian companies and entities. It said 30

⁷⁹ PTI, “India to provide USD 51 million development aid to Suriname,” <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/economy/india-to-provide-usd-51-million-development-aid-to-suriname-2616841.html>, Accessed on 25 June 2018.

⁸⁰ Gideon Long, “Venezuela: all change, no change,” <https://www.ft.com/content/a1e1d012-75a8-11e8-b326-75a27d27ea5f>, Accessed on 25 June 2018.

⁸¹ “German intelligence sees Russia behind hack of energy firms: media report”, *Reuters*, June 20, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-cyber-russia/german-intelligence-sees-russia-behind-hack-of-energy-firms-media-report-idUSKBN1JG2X2> Accessed on June 25, 2018.

⁸² “Russia backs OPEC oil output hike”, *Economic Times*, June 23, 2018. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/business/russia-backs-opec-oil-output-hike/articleshow/64712375.cms> Accessed on June 25, 2018.

Russian legal entities and 14 individuals were added to the sanction list, taking it to 1,762 individuals and 786 entities. The council has said the sanctions would last at least three years and included penalties on Russian lawmakers and top officials.⁸³

- **Russia and India**

On 20 June, India and Russia have decided to cooperate in area of integrated security system taking forward their decades old defence cooperation. Russia's NIKIRET and India's CORE Energy Systems Pvt. Ltd. signed a cooperation agreement to promote Technical Security Equipment (TSE) in India. Integrated security systems are a group of technical protective means intended for organization of alarm security subsystems, monitoring of access control subsystems, monitoring of CCTV subsystems, performance of warning function. The two companies will jointly explore the opportunities and provide a wide range of services including Access control and security system, Data acquisition and Processing, Mobile security system.⁸⁴

- **Russia and South Korea**

On 22 June, Russian President Vladimir Putin and South Korean President Moon Jae-in agreed to take steps towards establishing complete denuclearisation and to cooperate on future economic opportunities and infrastructure projects during Moon's visit to Russia. Moon said that co-operation with Russia was key to peace in the Korean Peninsula. President Vladimir Putin said Russia will continue to play its part in the search for a solution to the weapons standoff in the Korean Peninsula. Putin and Moon agreed to joint research in the fields of electricity, gas and railways in order to advance cooperative projects between North Korea, Russia and South Korea. In addition to security, Russia and South Korea talked about a free trade agreement.⁸⁵

- **Russia and Its Domestic Politics**

According to a ruling from Russia's top court on 21 June, police can confiscate cell phones from social media users who have posted content they deem extremist, even without a criminal prosecution. Russian authorities have increasingly targeted ordinary Russians for social media activity, including handing out jail sentences for posting images and comments critical of the country's leadership.⁸⁶

South Asia

Afghanistan

- **Ghani, Pence Discuss Afghan Peace**

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's decision of ceasefire during Eid was welcomed by international community especially US. On 21 June 2018, President Ashraf Ghani had a

⁸³"Ukraine extends its Russian sanctions list", *Reuters*, June 22, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-russia-sanctions/ukraine-extends-its-russian-sanctions-list-idUSKBN1J10F9> Accessed on June 25, 2018.

⁸⁴Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "India, Russia join hands to promote integrated security system", *Economic Times*, June 20, 2018. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-russia-join-hands-to-promote-integrated-security-system/articleshow/64671087.cms> Accessed on June 25, 2018.

⁸⁵"Moon, Putin meet in Russia, hope to boost economic ties", *TRT World*, June 23, 2018. <https://www.trtworld.com/asia/moon-putin-meet-in-russia-hope-to-boost-economic-ties-18391> Accessed on June 25, 2018.

⁸⁶"Police Can Confiscate Phones Without a Criminal Prosecution", *The Moscow Times*, June 21, 2018. <https://themoscowtimes.com/news/phones-confiscate-without-criminal-prosecution-61942> Accessed on June 25, 2018.

telephonic conversation with US Vice President **Mike Pence**. **During the conversation, US highly appreciated Afghan government's recent efforts to restore peace in the country. Stressing for joint collaboration for tackling terrorism, US highlighted that the country would always support Afghan government in its fights against terrorism network and rebuilding the nation**⁸⁷. President Ghani mentioned, "The vice-president commended the Afghan government's resolve to work for peace and congratulated the Afghan forces on successful overseeing of ceasefire during Eid."⁸⁸

- **Nicholson Hopes Pakistan to do 'Maximum' for Afghan Peace**

During a press conference in Jalalabad, capital city of Nangarhar province, General Nicholson, NATO and US Forces commander in Afghanistan was of the view that Pakistan had a crucial role to play in encouraging Taliban to come to peace negotiating table. Apart from Taliban threat, General Nicholson discussed elimination of Daesh insurgent group and holding of peaceful election in the country with the governor of the province Hayatullah Hayat. Reassuring of NATO's full assistance, Gen. Nicholson held that security is the top most priority and NATO would provide full assistance to keep Daesh in check and guaranteeing security for upcoming elections.⁸⁹

- **US Ready To Facilitate Talks Between Govt and Taliban**

The three day ceasefire between Afghan government and Taliban commenced hopes for peace process in Afghanistan. On 20 June 2018, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice Wells while addressing to the members of US House Foreign Affairs Committee said, "The United States has made clear that we are prepared to support, facilitate and participate in direct negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban. We will support all Afghan stakeholders as we work to reach a mutually agreed negotiated settlement that ends the conflict and ensures that Afghanistan is never again used as a safe haven for terrorist groups". Wells also stressed that Pakistan should take additional steps influencing Taliban to cut their linkage with Al-Qaeda and committed to the constitution of Afghanistan. She hailed military pressure as an important strategy to bring Taliban for peace offer.⁹⁰

- **Abdullah Meets With Regional Heads of State in Dushanbe**

In a conference held on the sidelines of the Water for Sustainable Development summit on 20 June 2018, Afghan CEO Abdullah Abdullah spoke on water scarcity around the world. He said that Afghanistan suffer from acute shortage of water reservoirs, the melting of snow resources, drought and water pollution. During the Summit, Abdullah met with Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, Pakistan's President Mamnoon Hussain and Tajikistan's Prime Minister Kokhir Rasulzoda and discussed that peace in Afghanistan would have positive implications for regional stability and development. The Afghan CEO specifically focussed on building high level contacts between Pakistan and Afghanistan. As far as water issues are concerned, the Afghan government would provide all possible assistance to reduce water related challenges in the region.⁹¹

- **Taliban Continues to Fight Afghan Forces despite Government Ceasefire**

⁸⁷ Tolo News, 22 June 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/ghani-pence-discuss-afghan-peace>.

⁸⁸ Daily Outlook Afghanistan, 23 June 2018, http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21180.

⁸⁹ Daily Outlook Afghanistan, 25 June 2018, http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21190

⁹⁰ Tolo News, 22 June 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/us-ready-facilitate-talks-between-govt-and-taliban>

⁹¹ Tolo News, 20 June 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/abdullah-address-key-water-resource-management-summit>

The Afghan defence ministry released a statement adding that the Taliban attacked security forces despite President Ashraf Ghani's decision of extending the ceasefire by ten days. Mohammad Radmanish, the Defence Ministry spokesman said, "We have had casualties during the (past) week, but in the past 24 hours, we imposed casualties on those who acted against the ceasefire". Jawed Kohistani, military affairs analyst held that on account of lack of planning on the part of the government has led to casualties among soldiers. According to him, "This ceasefire does not have any legal, official or specific measures and roadmaps. It does not illustrate in which areas and how the soldiers will observe the ceasefire".⁹²

Bangladesh

- **Rohingya Repatriation: UN insists on citizenship**

The UN secretary-general's special envoy on Myanmar has said granting citizenship to the Rohingya and ensuring accountability for the perpetrators of violence against the community could help create a conducive environment for their safe and voluntary repatriation. "In particular, ending restrictions on freedom of movement and granting citizenship to those eligible would soon lead to an environment that would be conducive to the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of the IDPs and refugees to their place of origin or choice," said Christine Schraner Burgener.⁹³

- **Myanmar not to 'totally' accept ICC's demand**

As the pre-trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) wants to know Myanmar's observations on 'intentionally deported' into Bangladesh, the country says the ICC does not have the right to taking action against it. "Myanmar is neither a member country nor signs the agreement. Therefore, the ICC does not have the right to taking action against Myanmar," said Director General of the Myanmar State Counsellor Office Zaw Htay.⁹⁴

- **Quader finds no necessity of dialogue with BNP**

Awami League general secretary Obaidul Quader on Friday (June 22) ruled out any possibility of holding dialogue with the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party ahead of the next parliament election, state news agency BSS reports. "There is no necessity of holding dialogue with BNP now," he told a press conference marking the Awami League's 69th anniversary at the party president's Dhanmondi political office in the capital.⁹⁵

- **Bangladesh-India navy joint patrol in Bay from June 27, June 25**

The naval forces of Bangladesh and India will, for the first time, conduct a joint patrol exercise, namely the Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT), in the Bay of Bengal from June 27. The aim is to ensure the security of the maritime boundaries of the neighbouring countries. Chief of the naval staff (CNS) of India, Admiral Sunil Lanba, currently in Dhaka, will inaugurate the three-day (June 27-29) exercise in the Bay.⁹⁶

- **BNP: AL is using police to conduct electoral activities**

⁹² Daily Outlook Afghanistan, 25 June 2018, http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21188

⁹³ "Rohingya Repatriation: UN insists on citizenship," *Daily Star*, June 23, 2018, <https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/rohingya-repatriation-un-insists-citizenship-1593997>, accessed on June 23, 2018.

⁹⁴ "Myanmar not to 'totally' accept ICC's demand," *The Independent*, June 23, 2018, <http://www.theindependentbd.com/post/154977>, accessed on June 23, 2018.

⁹⁵ "Quader finds no necessity of dialogue with BNP," *Prothom Alo*, June 25, 2018, <http://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/news/178291/Quader-finds-no-necessity-of-dialogue-with-BNP>, accessed on June 25, 2018.

⁹⁶ "Bangladesh-India navy joint patrol in Bay from June 27," *The Independent*, June 25, 2018, <http://www.theindependentbd.com/post/155202>, accessed on June 25, 2018.

The ruling party is using the police instead of its own party leaders and activists to conduct electoral activities during the Gazipur City Corporation election, alleges BNP. "Awami League is not using its party members," said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir on Sunday (June 24). "In Gazipur, they are using the superintendent of police and Detective Branch officials to work in favour of their party candidate."⁹⁷

नेपाल

- **प्रधानमंत्री चीन यात्रा पर रवाना:**

नेपाल के प्रधानमंत्री के पी शर्मा ओली चीन की 6 दिवसीय राजकीय यात्रा पर मंगलवार को रवाना हो रहे हैं। ओली की 2016 में चीन यात्रा के दौरान हुए 10 सूत्री समझौते के आधार पर इस बार चीन के साथ संबंधों में प्रगति लाने का प्रयास होगा। एजेंडे में मुख्यतः चीन द्वारा अनुदानित प्रोजेक्टों को लागू करना, नेपाल और चीन के निजी सेक्टरों के मध्य समझौते, केरुंग-काठमांडू रेल मार्ग के सर्वे पर ज्ञापन पत्र, तिब्बत हाई वे पर सामानों की आवाजाही, नये चेक पोस्ट खोलना और साथ ही बेल्ट रोड पहल के तहत विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में निर्माण।⁹⁸

- **प्रधानमंत्री ओली की चीन यात्रा की महत्वता:**

नेपाल प्रधानमंत्री के पी शर्मा ओली की चीन यात्रा के दौरान नेपाल और चीन के मध्य रेल मार्ग का महत्वपूर्ण समझौता हुआ। जिसके तहत तिब्बत के जिले केरुंग को रेलमार्ग द्वारा काठमांडू से जोड़ने की बात कही गयी। इस समझौते को द्विपक्षीय सहयोग के इतिहास में सबसे महत्वपूर्ण पहल माना जा रहा है। गुरुवार को उच्च स्तरीय वार्ता के बाद दोनों पक्षों द्वारा एक ज्ञापन समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर किये गये। इस संदर्भ में विदेश मंत्री प्रदीप ग्यावली ने कहा कि इस प्रोजेक्ट की विस्तृत प्रोजेक्ट रिपोर्ट 18 महीने में तैयार कर ली जाएगी और इस सम्पूर्ण प्रोजेक्ट को पांच साल में पूरा कर लिया जायेगा।⁹⁹

Indian Ocean Region

- **India, Seychelles agree to work on Assumption Island project**

According to a media report, on June 25, 2018, after talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting Seychelles President Danny Faure, keeping each other concerns in mind, India and Seychelles are agreed to work together on a project to develop a naval base at the Assumption Island.¹⁰⁰ "We have agreed to work together on Assumption Island project based on each other's rights,"¹⁰¹ said Prime Minister Narendra Modi after a meeting with President Danny Faure on 25 June 2018 in New Delhi. "India and Seychelles are major strategic partners. We respect the core values of a democracy and share the geo-strategic vision to maintain the peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean,"¹⁰² said PM Modi. "Assumption Island project was discussed, we are equally

⁹⁷ "BNP: AL is using police to conduct electoral activities," *Dhaka Tribune*, June 25, 2018, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/election/2018/06/25/bnp-al-is-using-police-to-conduct-electoral-activities>, accessed on June 25, 2018.

⁹⁸ Anil Giri, Binod Ghimere, "PM Leaves for China today" *The Kathmandu Post*, 19 June 2018, <https://epaper-beta.ekantipur.com/kathmandupost/2018-06-19>

⁹⁹ Akhilesh upadhyaya, "PM Oli winds up Beijing visit on high note", *The Kathmandu Post*, 22 June 2018, <https://epaper-beta.ekantipur.com/kathmandupost/2018-06-22>

¹⁰⁰ India, Seychelles agree to work on Assumption Island naval base project, respect concerns, June 25, 2018, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-seychelles-agree-to-work-on-assumption-island-project-respect-concerns/articleshow/64731739.cms>, (Accessed on June 25, 2018)

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid

engaged and will work together bearing each other's interests,"¹⁰³ Seychelles President Danny Faure said.

- **Kenyan Defence Minister Raychelle Omamo visits Western Naval Command**

Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Defence (Defence Minister), Raychelle Omamo, Cabinet Secretary for visited the Western Naval Command headquarters Mumbai along with a high-level military delegation on June 22, 2018.¹⁰⁴ During the visit Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Defence interacted with Vice Admiral Girish Luthra, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, and other senior officers of the Western Naval Command and discussed issues of mutual interests such as strengthening of defence cooperation, enhancing bilateral training and interactions, maritime security, and stability in the Indian Ocean region.¹⁰⁵

- **South Africa's Research and Polar Vessel Agulhas II in Tanzania**

On June 15, 2018, the Department of Environmental Affairs' (DEA), Government of South Africa, research and polar vessel, the SA Agulhas II docked in Tanzania.¹⁰⁶ The vessel reached at Tanzania coast as part of South Africa's second training and capacity building voyage for the International Indian Ocean Expedition II (IIOE2).¹⁰⁷ "The IIOE2 is a multi-national programme of the United Nations Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) which emphasises the need to research the Indian Ocean and its influence on the climate and its marine ecosystem,"¹⁰⁸ official website of Department of Environmental Affairs' (DEA), South Africa, mentioned. According to the DEA website "the gathering of basic long-term environmental data and information will place the developing countries of the Indian Ocean, in a better position to conserve the integrity of its ocean, find ways to unlock their respective potential Ocean Economies to improve the lives of their citizens; and to better detect and adapt to ocean related threats to coastal communities and infrastructure."¹⁰⁹

Pakistan

- **Pakistan and Tajikistan relations**

President Mamnoon Hussain while on a four day visit to Dushanbe to attend the conference on 'International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-28', met his counterpart President Emomali Rahmon on June 19th. During the talks, the two sides agreed to give new impetus to their ties through enhanced cooperation in diverse areas, including trade, energy, connectivity, defence, health, education and culture. They stressed on strengthening their relations by adopting measures to take bilateral trade to \$500 million per annum, immediate revival of air links and early implementation of the CASA-1000 (Central Asia South Asia) electricity project.¹¹⁰

- **Pakistan and US**

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Kenyan Defence Minister visits Western Naval Command, June 23, 2018, <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/india/kenyan-defence-minister-visits-western-naval-command-2624951.html> (Accessed on June 25, 2018)

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ SA Agulhas II arrives in Tanzania for Second International Indian Ocean Expedition II, 15 June 2018, <https://www.environment.gov.za/mediarelease/SAagulhasIIarrivesinTanzania> (Accessed on June 25, 2018)

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹

¹¹⁰ "Pakistan, Tajikistan agree to boost annual trade to \$500m", *Dawn*, June 20, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1414898> as accessed on June 25, 2018; "Pakistan, Tajikistan agree to strengthen bilateral relations", *The Express Tribune*, June 19, 2018, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1737578/1-pakistan-tajikistan-agree-strengthen-bilateral-relations/> as accessed on June 25, 2018

US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice G. Wells at a congressional hearing on June 20th mentioned that Pakistan is still under US notice to eliminate all terrorist sanctuaries from its territory, although relations between the two countries show some signs of improvement. Ms Wells acknowledged that the policy of coercing Pakistan into accepting US demands had not been very successful. “Despite some positive indicators, we have not yet seen Pakistan take the sustained or decisive steps that we would have expected to see ten months after the announcement of the (Trump administration’s) South Asia strategy,” she said. She stated that Pakistan should work with the US to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table and arrest or expel those Taliban elements that do not join the peace process.¹¹¹

- **Pakistan to Launch Observatory Satellite**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on June 24th announced the launch of Pakistan’s indigenously developed 285kg PakTES-1A observatory satellite in July. Fitted with sensors and cameras, PakTES-1A will remain stationary 610km in space and its position relative to the sun will not change. The navigation technology for the satellite was acquired from China back in 2012.¹¹²

Sri Lanka

- **14 individuals linked to LTTE designated by Sri Lankan govt**

The Government has issued an extraordinary gazette notification listing the names of 14 individuals living overseas with links to the LTTE and banning them from entering Sri Lanka, by placing them in the list of designated persons. The amendment to the List of Designated persons under the United Nations Regulations No. 01 of 2012 has been made through a gazette issued by Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, Kapila Waidyaratne. Among the individuals included to the list are LTTE intelligence leaders ‘Seel Maran’, ‘Parathan’ and ‘Siranjeev Master’ as well as the terrorist organization’s international financial leader Sivasubramaniyam Jeyaganesh a.k.a Ganesh.¹¹³

- **US assures it will help SL fulfill UN commitments**

In the wake of the US pull-out from the UNHRC, US Ambassador to Sri Lanka Atul Keshap met with senior Sri Lankan officials and assured them that the US would continue to support Sri Lanka as it works to fulfil commitments made with regard to UN resolutions. In a statement, the US Embassy said Ambassador Keshap had assured Sri Lankan officials that they will remain fully engaged with Sri Lanka. “We would continue to support the Sri Lankan Government to meet its continuing and standing commitments to the international community, to advance the cause of reconciliation and lasting peace for all Sri Lankans,” it said.¹¹⁴

- **Compensation to war-affected: New Cabinet memo submitted**

¹¹¹ “US official reminds Pakistan it’s still on notice”, *Dawn*, June 22, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1415320> as accessed on June 25, 2018

¹¹² “Pakistan to launch observatory satellite next month”, *Dawn*, June 25, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1415924/pakistan-to-launch-observatory-satellite-next-month> as accessed on June 25, 2018

¹¹³ 14 individuals linked to LTTE designated by Sri Lankan govt, 22 June 2018, <https://news.lk/news/sri-lanka/item/21058-gazette-notification-issued-against-14-close-associates-of-ltte>

¹¹⁴ US assures it will help SL fulfill UN commitments, 21 June 2018, <https://news.lk/news/world/item/21046-us-assures-it-will-help-sl-fulfill-un-commitments>

Fresh Cabinet memorandum seeking to grant compensation to war affected people including ex-LTTE combatants was reported to have been submitted. Sources said, the Cabinet withheld its approval for this compensation formula till the establishment of the reparation office after enacting necessary legislation. This is the third time this Cabinet paper was submitted. It was first submitted last year. But, the move was shelved amid widespread objections to the inclusion of ex-LTTE combatants.¹¹⁵

Maldives

- **Foreign Minister, Dr. Asim returns to Maldives after a successful official visit to Japan**

Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Asim concluded a three-day official visit to Japan. During the visit Minister Asim met with his counterpart Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, H.E. Mr. Taro Kono. Both ministers signed a JPY 300 million grant assistance agreement, under the Japanese Economic and Social Development Cooperation Programme, which would support the health sector of Maldives. The foreign ministers also held bilateral talks to discuss avenues of further cooperation to enhance and advance the Maldives-Japan relationship in a wide range of fields including environment, climate change, disaster prevention, tourism and health care. The importance of the maritime security under the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy was also among the issues discussed during the meeting.¹¹⁶

- **Councillors suspended en masse over MDP primary**

The Local Government Authority has suspended 26 councillors for participating in the Maldivian Democratic Party's presidential primary. The 21 island councillors and five atoll councillors have been suspended without pay for three months, the pro-government Sun Online reported. The LGA, a supervisory body chaired by the home minister, informed them there was evidence to prove they helped conduct the primary despite a civil court order to stop the polls.¹¹⁷

- **Arrested justices stripped of posts as top court upholds their jail verdicts**

The Supreme Court has rejected the top court justices' appeal over their jail period sentence and upheld the lower court's verdict, thus stripping the duo of their posts at the apex court. The Criminal Court had earlier convicted the now former Chief Justice Abdulla Saeed and former Judge Ali Hameed to jail time of one year, seven months and six days over undue influence on the judiciary.¹¹⁸

- **Jumhooree Party announces shadow cabinet sans MDP, sparking outcry**

Jumhooree Party (JP)'s leader Qasim Ibrahim has announced the shadow cabinet of his party's coalition sans main opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), to resounding criticism. Qasim, who resides in Germany under political asylum, made the announcement via video on his Facebook page. He declared himself the President of a

¹¹⁵ Compensation to war-affected: New Cabinet memo submitted, 20 June 2018,

<http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/Compensation-to-war-affected-New-Cabinet-memo-submitted-151517.html>

¹¹⁶ Foreign Minister, Dr. Asim returns to Maldives after a successful official visit to Japan, 18 June 2018, <http://www.foreign.gov.mv/index.php/en/mediacentre/news/4493-foreign-minister,-dr-asim-returns-to-maldives-after-a-successful-official-visit-to-japan>

¹¹⁷ Councillors suspended en masse over MDP primary, 22 June 2018, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/councillors-suspended-en-masse-over-mdp-primary-138893>

¹¹⁸ Arrested justices stripped of posts as top court upholds their jail verdicts, 21 June 2018, <https://edition.mv/news/6291>

Jumhooree coalition, with former Vice President Dr. Mohamed Jameel Ahmed as his deputy.¹¹⁹

- **Indian govt requests Maldives to resolve issues concerning work permit denial**
The government of India has officially requested the Maldivian government to resolve the issue of authorities holding up work permits for Indian citizens. The Chief Minister of Kerala Pinarayi Vijayan had sent a letter to the Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj expressing his concern over Indian citizens being denied work permits, stating that over 30,000 Indians, a majority hailing from Kerala, were working in various fields in the Maldives including education, health and tourism.¹²⁰

West Asia

Iraq and GCC

- **Iraq plans manual election recount only for suspected ballots¹²¹**
Iraq will conduct a manual recount of votes from a May election only for ballots mentioned in official reports on fraud or in formal complaints, a move likely to speed up the ratification of final results and the formation of a new government. Interpreting a ruling from the Supreme Federal Court, a panel of judges who are now in charge of the elections commission said on June 24 that they would only manually recount problematic ballots “out of respect for the will of voters and their rights ... and to preserve their vote which came without any violation.” The law passed by parliament had also suspended the Independent High Election Commission’s nine-member board of commissioners and replaced them with judges.
Ballot boxes from areas where there were fraud allegations will be moved to the capital Baghdad, where the recount will be held in the presence of United Nations representatives at a time and place to be determined later, the panel said in a statement.
- **Iraqi Pm Haider al-Abadi, Sadr alliance brings government closer¹²²**
Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and cleric Moqtada al-Sadr said on June 23 that their political blocs would enter into an alliance, bringing Iraq one step closer to forming a new government. “We announce a cross-sectarian, cross-ethnic alliance to speed up forming the next government and to agree on common points that guarantee the interests of the Iraqi people,” Sadr said at a news conference in the Shi’ite holy city of Najaf. He called for a wider alliance consisting of all components of Iraqi society that would form an inclusive government.
“I affirm that this alliance is not in contrast to any other alliances either of the two lists have previously entered into with other blocs, rather, it flows in the same direction and same principles,” said Abadi. Despite coming in third, Abadi is hoping to win a second term as a compromise candidate for the premiership. Analysts and diplomats say he would be weakened and beholden to Sadr and Amiri even if he manages to stay on, however.
- **UAE FM to visit six Indian cities; focus on energy, trade ties¹²³**

¹¹⁹ Jumhooree Party announces shadow cabinet sans MDP, sparking outcry, 19 June 2018, <https://edition.mv/news/6268>

¹²⁰ Indian govt requests Maldives to resolve issues concerning work permit denial, 20 June 2018, <https://edition.mv/news/6275>

¹²¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-election/iraq-plans-manual-election-recount-only-for-suspect-ballots-idUSKBN1JKONL>

¹²² <https://www.financialexpress.com/world-news/iraqi-pm-haider-al-abadi-sadr-alliance-brings-government-closer/1217780/>

UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan will visit six Indian cities and hold talks with External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj during his week-long India tour that will focus on boosting energy and trade cooperation. Abdullah, during his trip, starting on June 24, will visit New Delhi, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru.

FM Nahyan will hold delegation-level talks with Swaraj here on Monday (June 25) after which agreements in various sectors are expected to be signed. During the visit, a trilateral agreement between Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), Saudi Arabian Oil Company, and India's Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas is also expected to be inked. The two countries are also hoping to put in place a food security partnership that envisages storage farms in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh to store excess agricultural produce for supply in the Arab state. UAE construction giant Emaar is building storage facilities in the three states toward this end.¹²⁴

The present visit would provide the two sides with the opportunity to further strengthen their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, the MEA had said earlier.

- **Bahrain Court acquits opposition leader Sheikh Ali Salman**¹²⁵

A court in the Gulf state acquitted the Secretary General of Al-Wefaq opposition group of all charges in his trial for alleged spying for regional rival Qatar, activists said. In Thursday (June 21) case, Sheikh Salman and two other officials from Al-Wefaq, Sheikh Hassan Ali Juma Sultan and Ali Mahdi Ali al-Aswad, faced spying charges. Sheikh Salman, 52, long has been targeted by the Bahraini regime. In 1994, he was arrested, tortured and detained for months without trial before being deported and forced to live in exile for over 15 years, according to the United Nations. He was a prominent figure in Bahrain's Arab Spring protests in 2011, in which the island's Shiite majority and others demanded more freedoms from the Sunni monarchy. In December 2014, two days after being re-elected as Al-Wefaq -- the main Shia opposition group in the country -- secretary-general, Salman was again arrested by security forces. This time, prosecutors brought him to trial on charges he insulted the Interior Ministry.

Israel

- **Israel Navy's New Weapon System**

The Israeli Navy announced on June 19 that an advanced torpedo system successfully passed its final operational tests and is slated to be installed in Israel's five-boat submarine fleet. The new torpedo is "digital," has electronic warfare capabilities and is able to avoid some enemy navies' detection methods, while its computerized smarts lend it greater precision and make it easier to integrate into the complex modern battlefield. Israel's navy is the only one deploying the system that has the ability to maintain it domestically.¹²⁶

- **Ongoing Conflict at Gaza**

Throughout the week there were exchange of rockets being fired by Hamas and the Israeli forces. Protestors continued the use of balloons and kites to ignite fields in Israeli settlements and damage infrastructure.¹²⁷ A 'Hackathon' was organised on June 22 in

¹²³ <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/economy/uae-fm-to-visit-six-indian-cities-focus-on-energy-trade-ties-2627631.html>

¹²⁴ <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/madhya-pradesh-maharashtra-gujarat-big-in-india-uae-food-security-plan/articleshow/64726866.cms>

¹²⁵ <https://english.almanar.com.lb/525604>

¹²⁶ "Navy says new 'smart' torpedo set for deployment", *The Times of Israel*, June 19, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/navy-says-new-smart-torpedo-set-for-deployment/> as accessed on June 25, 2018

¹²⁷ "Major Gaza Escalation: Hamas, Islamic Jihad Rewrote the Rules Against Israel", *Haaretz*, June 21, 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-major-gaza-israel-escalation-rockets-fired-idf-strikes-hamas-targets->

Jerusalem to generate ideas for solving the "kite terror" problem along the Israel-Gaza Strip border. Participants of the event have come up with ideas to work on laser and optics that can recognize them before landing and burn the kites remotely. Participants also included bird experts, kite fliers, balloon pilots, fire experts, security personnel, programmers, engineers, technology veterans of elite army units, and an expert on training birds to destroy kites, quadcopters and balloons.¹²⁸

- **Israel and US**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with Senior Advisor to President Donald Trump Jared Kushner and Special Representative for International Negotiations Jason Greenblatt in Jerusalem on June 22 and 23, 2018. The American delegation presented the PM with details of the American-sponsored peace plan which aims to re-start a negotiation process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. King Abdullah II of Jordan met with Kushner and Greenblatt on June 20 and stressed the importance of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.¹²⁹ The Prime Minister's Office issued a statement saying the discussions centered on the diplomatic process with the Palestinians, regional developments and the security and humanitarian situation in Gaza.¹³⁰

- **Syrian Drone and Israel**

The Israeli army fired a Patriot missile at an unmanned aerial vehicle that approached Israel from Syria on June 24. As a result of the launch, the drone moved away from the border. The army said it could not verify whether the target was hit.¹³¹

Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism

Pakistan

S.No	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	June 20	Balochistan	At least four terrorists and a child were killed while eight others were injured in a shootout between security forces and terrorists during an	5	8

¹²⁸ [1.6195076](http://www.palestinechronicle.com/police-minister-israel-might-have-no-choice-but-to-launch-a-military-operation-in-gaza/) as accessed on June 25, 2018; "Israeli Minister: We Have No Choice but to Launch a Military Operation in Gaza", *The Palestine Chronicle*, June 21, 2018, <http://www.palestinechronicle.com/police-minister-israel-might-have-no-choice-but-to-launch-a-military-operation-in-gaza/> as accessed on June 25, 2018; "Israeli Aircraft Fires Warning Shots at Gazans Preparing to Launch Airborne Firebombs", *Haaretz*, June 23, 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/israel-fires-warning-shots-at-gazans-preparing-incendiary-balloons-1.6199720> as accessed on June 25, 2018

¹²⁹ "Israel fights "kite terror" with hi-tech", *Xinhua*, June 21, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/21/c_137271113.htm as accessed on June 25, 2018

¹²⁹ "Kushner and Greenblatt meet Netanyahu, set to discuss U.S. peace plan", *The Jerusalem Post*, June 22, 2018, <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Kushner-and-Greenblatt-meet-Netanyahu-US-peace-plan-set-to-be-discussed-560627> as accessed on June 25, 2018

¹³⁰ "Kushner and Greenblatt meet Netanyahu for a second time", *The Jerusalem Post*, June 24, 2018, <https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Kushner-and-Greenblatt-meet-Netanyahu-for-a-second-time-560708> as accessed on June 25, 2018

¹³¹ "Israeli Army Fires Patriot Missile at Drone Approaching From Syria", *Haaretz*, June 24, 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/israeli-army-fires-patriot-missile-at-syria-1.6201055> as accessed on June 25, 2018

			encounter in Tera Meel area of Dasht in Mastung district. ¹³²		
2	June 21	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	A Frontier Reserve Police (FRP) constable, identified as Shah Fahad, was killed when unidentified armed assailants opened fire on a police post in Hayatabad town of provincial capital Peshawar. ¹³³	1	0
3	June 23	Balochistan	Six people, including three policemen, were injured in an explosion, targeting on a police vehicle, in Naseerabad district. ¹³⁴	0	6
4	June 23	FATA	Six suspected terrorists were killed in an intelligence-based operation carried out by security forces in the Ladha region of South Waziristan Agency, an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) press statement said. The operation, carried out under the broader Operation Raddul Fassad, was initiated on intelligence reports that militants had entered the area along with returning Temporarily Displaced Persons. ¹³⁵	6	0
5	June 25	Lahore	Jama'at-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Muhammad Saeed while speaking at the social media workshop of Milli Muslim League (MML), JuD's political face, urged the youth to play their due role in protecting ideological boundaries of the country. "The enthusiasm the youth showed at the time of creation of Pakistan needed to be instilled again," he said. ¹³⁶		JuD chief Hafiz Saeed urges youth to protect the ideology of the country

¹³² 4 terrorists, child killed in Mastung shootout, *The Nation*, June 21, 2018, <https://nation.com.pk/21-Jun-2018/4-terrorists-child-killed-in-mastung-shootout>, accessed on June 25, 2018

¹³³ Hassan Farhan, Police constable martyred in gun attack on checkpoint in Peshawar, *Dawn*, June 22, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1415251/police-constable-martyred-in-gun-attack-on-checkpoint-in-peshawar>, accessed on June 25, 2018

¹³⁴ Syed Ali Shah, Blast targeting police vehicle injures six, including three policemen, *Dawn*, June 23, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1415651/blast-targeting-police-vehicle-injures-six-including-three-policemen>, accessed on June 25, 2018

¹³⁵ 6 suspected terrorists killed in South Waziristan military operation, *Dawn*, June 23, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1415648/6-suspected-terrorists-killed-in-south-waziristan-military-operation>, accessed on June 25, 2018

¹³⁶ MML's social media moot, *Dawn*, June 25, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1415986/mmls-social-media-moot>, accessed on June 25, 2018

Afghanistan

S.No	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	June 22	Kandahar	Taliban militants kidnapped 43 people from a road construction camp during a raid in Spin Boldak district. Four Policemen were killed and another was injured. Among the 43 kidnapped were technical workers, cooks and drivers. ¹³⁷	4	1
2	June 23	Baghlan	A policeman was killed and two others were injured in an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) detonated close to a voter registration center in Baghlan-e-Markazi district. ¹³⁸	1	2
3	June 23	Kabul	Taliban has continued to fight government forces despite a 10-day extension of the ceasefire by President Ashraf Ghani. The Defense Ministry said “dozens” of security force members have been killed in Taliban attacks in the past four days in clashes in at least 10 provinces. However, the Ministry did not provide an exact number of casualties. ¹³⁹	Extended ceasefire violated	
4	June 22-23	Wardak	The Taliban stormed and captured 13 check posts and escaped with military hardware, weapons and ammunition, in Jalrez district of Maidan Wardak province. The attacks took place against Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF) check posts in the province. The check		

¹³⁷ Taliban kidnap 43 Afghans including road construction workers, *Business Standard*, June 22, 2018, https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/taliban-kidnap-43-afghans-including-road-construction-workers-118062201003_1.html, accessed on June 25, 2018

¹³⁸ One Dead In Baghlan Voter Registration Centre Explosion, *Tolo News*, June 23, 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/elections-2018/one-dead-baghlan-voter-registration-center-explosion>, accessed on June 25, 2018

¹³⁹ Karim Amini, Violence Continues Despite Govt’s Ceasefire, *Tolo News*, June 23, 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/violence-continues-despite-govt%E2%80%99s-ceasefire>, accessed on June 25, 2018

			posts have been under siege since then. ¹⁴⁰		
5	June 24	Nangarhar	A senior leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria Khorasan (ISIS-K), identified as Adam Khan, was killed during an operation in Chaparhar district. Khan was involved in attacks in Jalalabad city. ¹⁴¹	1	0

Iraq

S.No.	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	June 22	Kirkuk	Iraqi police forces found two tunnels used by Islamic State (ISIS) and detonated 13 explosive charges during security campaigns in Hawija district. Federal Police Chief Raed Shawkat Gawdat said in a statement that three terrorists were also arrested in two villages, while three others fled the scene. ¹⁴²	Two ISIS tunnels discovered	
2	June 23	Mosul	Iraqi police forces arrested a former IS 'provincial ruler', identified as Mejhem (Abu Seif) al-Barari, in Mosul, and also ran into facilities belonging to the militants. Barari was the provincial ruler of Tel Keif. ¹⁴³	Arrest	
3	June 24	Salahuddin	Iraqi security troops killed Abu Salam al-Iraqi, IS's mastermind of explosions, abduction and fake checkpoints in	1	0

¹⁴⁰ Taliban storm 16 check posts in Maidan Wardak, *ANI*, June 25, 2018, <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/taliban-storm-16-check-posts-in-maidan-wardak201806250631470001/>, accessed on June 25, 2018

¹⁴¹ ISIS leader responsible for recent deadly attacks in Jalalabad has been killed, *Khaama Press*, June 24, 2018, <https://www.khaama.com/isis-leader-responsible-for-recent-deadly-attacks-in-jalalabad-has-been-killed-05420/>, accessed on June 25, 2018

¹⁴² Mohammed Ebraheem, Iraqi police find two tunnels for Islamic State in Kirkuk's Hawija, *Iraqi News*, June 20, 2018, <https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/iraqi-police-find-two-tunnels-for-islamic-state-in-kirkuks-hawija/>, accessed on June 25, 2018

¹⁴³ Mohamed Mostafa, Iraqi police arrest former Islamic State provincial ruler in Mosul, *Iraqi News*, June 21, 2018 <https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/iraqi-police-arrest-former-islamic-state-provincial-ruler-in-mosul/>, accessed on June 25, 2018

			Shirqat town, during an operation in Salahuddin province. ¹⁴⁴		
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Syria

S.No	Date	Place	Incident	Killed	Injured
1	June 22	Syria-Iraq border	The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) recaptured al-Theeba village located on the Iraqi-Syrian borders following confrontation with IS terrorists. ¹⁴⁵	SF recaptures village	
2	June 23	Deir ez-Zor	Iraq killed 45 IS militants, including some senior leaders, in an air strike in eastern Syria. Those killed included the IS 'deputy war minister', a 'media chief', its 'police chief' and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's personal courier. The strike targeted three houses connected by a trench where IS leaders were meeting in the town of Hajin. The Euphrates valley area is one of the last parts of Syria under IS control. ¹⁴⁶	45	NS
3	June 25	NS	Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) announced that one of their military commanders, identified as General Shahrokh Daiepour, was killed in Syria. He allegedly used to train members of Hezbollah. ¹⁴⁷	1	0
4	June 25	Damascus	The Syrian Foreign Ministry has come out with a scathing criticism of Washington's decision to allocate USD 6.6 million to the White Helmets, a rescue group which Damascus and	Syrian Foreign Ministry accuses West of	

¹⁴⁴ Nehal Mostafa, Iraqi troops kill Islamic State's mastermind in Salahuddin: Sources, *Iraqi News*, June 24, 2018, <https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/iraqi-troops-kill-islamic-states-mastermind-in-salahuddin-sources/>, accessed on June 25, 2018

¹⁴⁵ Nehal Mostafa, Syrian Democratic Forces recapture village from Islamic State on borders with Iraq, *Iraqi News*, June 22, 2018, <https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/syrian-democratic-forces-recapture-village-from-islamic-state-on-borders-with-iraq/>, accessed on June 25, 2018

¹⁴⁶ Iraq 'kills 45 IS leaders' in eastern Syria strike, *BBC*, June 23, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-44588633>, accessed on June 25, 2018

¹⁴⁷ IRGC commander killed in Syria, *Al Masdar News*, June 25, 2018, <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/irgc-commander-killed-in-syria/>, accessed on June 25, 2018

			<p>Moscow have repeatedly accused of serving as a “media arm” for the Nusra Front.</p> <p>“The Syrian Foreign Ministry condemns the recent US decision to provide additional financial support to [the] ‘White Helmets’ terrorist organization, which is a blatant embodiment of US, French, British and other states’ support for various kinds of terrorism witnessed in Syria since 2011,” the Ministry said in a statement.¹⁴⁸</p>	<p>supporting terrorism</p>
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International Economic Issues

- **Donald Trump targets tariff on \$200 billion Chinese imports as spat grows**

On June 18, 2018, US President Donald Trump in a White House statement said that he had instructed the U.S. Trade Representative’s office to identify \$200 billion in imports from China for additional tariffs of 10 percent. He said the U.S. would impose tariffs on another \$200 billion after that if Beijing retaliates. On June 15, 2018, announced plans for tariffs on \$50 billion worth of imports from China, mainly with respect to technology and innovation.¹⁴⁹ In response, China announced retaliatory tariffs on \$34 billion worth of US goods, including agriculture products.¹⁵⁰

The European Union (EU) in retaliation imposed tariffs on €2.8bn (£2.4bn) worth of US goods such as bourbon whiskey, motorcycles and orange juice on June 15, 2018. While South Korea, Argentina, Australia and Brazil have agreed to put limits on the volume of metals they can ship to the US in lieu of tariffs, Canada and Mexico have announced it will impose retaliatory tariffs on C\$16.6bn (£9.5bn) worth of US exports from July 1 and \$3bn worth of American products ranging from steel to pork and bourbon two weeks ago respectively.¹⁵¹ The Indian government on June 22, 2018 slapped higher duties on a

¹⁴⁸ Syrian FM accuses West of backing terrorism through humanitarian groups, *Al Masdar News*, June 25, 2018, <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/syrian-fm-accuses-west-of-backing-terrorism-through-humanitarian-groups/>, accessed on June 25, 2018

²⁶ White House, “Statement from the President Regarding Trade with China:”, June 18, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-regarding-trade-china-2/> (June 18, 2018)

¹⁵⁰ “China announces retaliatory tariffs on \$34 billion worth of US goods, including agriculture products”, *CNBC*, June 15, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/06/15/china-announces-retaliatory-tariffs-on-34-billion-worth-of-us-goods-including-agriculture-products.html>

¹⁵¹ “EU tariffs on US goods come into force”, *BBC News*, June 22, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-44567636> (accessed on June 23, 2018)

number of items including apples, almonds, walnuts, diagnostic reagents and certain steel products.¹⁵²

- **Global Markets: Shares slide on trade worries, oil gives up some gains**

Asian shares fell on June 25, 2018, on escalating trade tensions between the United States and major economies while oil prices gave up some of their hefty gains made after major oil producers agreed to a modest increase in production. In Asia, S&P500 mini futures eased as much as 0.6 percent in early trade while MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan fell 0.95 percent to 6 1/2-month lows. Japan's Nikkei lost 0.8 percent. The falls were triggered by U.S. President Donald Trump plans to bar many Chinese companies from investing in U.S. technology firms and block additional technology exports to China. As the threat of a full-blown trade war has become all the more real, MSCI's gauge of stocks across the globe has fallen in five of the last six weeks, including last week, when it declined one percent - its biggest weekly drop in three months.

Chinese shares were among the biggest losers, tumbling 3.7 percent last week, as Trump put the heat on Beijing, threatening to hit \$200 billion of Chinese imports with 10 percent tariffs. Policy makers in China moved fast to temper any potential economic drag from the trade dispute with the United States, with China's central bank on June 24, 2018, saying it would cut the amount of cash that some banks must hold as reserves by 50 basis points (bps). Oil prices were supported after OPEC and non-OPEC producers agreed on a modest increase in production from next month, without announcing a clear target for the output increase, leaving traders guessing how much more will actually be pumped.¹⁵³

- **AIIB Investment to Attract Private Capital, Help Indian Infrastructure Development**

On June 25, 2018, the Board of Directors of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has approved an equity investment of USD 100 million in India's National Investment and Infrastructure Fund's (NIIF) Fund of Funds as Phase I for the NIIF Fund of Funds initial closing. AIIB is considering a further investment of USD 100 million as part of Phase II for the final closing, which would bring the bank's total commitment to USD 200 million. NIIF, anchored by the Government of India, is a collaborative investment platform for international and domestic investors that are keen on investing in commercially viable Indian infrastructure projects.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² "India slaps higher import duties on steel, agri products in retaliation to US tariff hikes", *The Indian Express*, June 22, 2018, <https://indianexpress.com/article/business/india-slaps-higher-import-duties-on-steel-agri-products-in-retaliation-to-us-tariff-hikes-5226965/> (accessed on June 23, 2018)

¹⁵³ Hideyuki Sano, "Global Markets: Shares slide on trade worries, oil gives up some gains", *Reuters*, June 25, 2018, <https://in.reuters.com/article/global-markets/global-markets-asian-shares-slip-on-trade-worries-oil-gives-up-some-gains-idINKBN1JL08B> (accessed on June 25, 2018)

¹⁵⁴ "AIIB Investment to Attract Private Capital, Help Indian Infrastructure Development", https://www.aiib.org/en/news-events/news/2018/20180625_001.html (accessed on June 25, 2018)