

## **Weekly Media Updates** **(04 – 10 June, 2018)**

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## Africa

- **Ethiopia's Call for Implementation of Algiers Agreement<sup>1</sup>**

In the first day of Ethiopia's ruling coalition executive committee meeting, held on 5 June 2018 the party Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) announced that it will fully accept and implement Algiers Agreement which ended devastating two years war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The agreement, which established the Boundary Commission and Claims Commission, was signed in December 2000. However, the two countries remained in a state of no-peace-no war for more than twenty years. There were deadly skirmishes between the two countries during this time but did not lead to full scale war. Further, the administrations in Asmara and Addis Ababa have been engaged in proxy wars as both sides have been supporting opposition forces. In the meeting Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) executive committee said that it carried out "an in-depth evaluation the situation of Ethiopia and Eritrea and called for an end to the conflict between the two [Eritrea and Ethiopia] brotherly people and for a durable peace". It has called on Eritrea to respond positively to the call for peace without any precondition and work towards the restoration of peace.

- **Sudan severs defence ties with North Korea<sup>2</sup>**

Sudan said on Wednesday, 6 June 2018, in the statement released by the foreign Ministry, that it had cut all defence ties with North Korea and ended all relations, direct or through a third party. Khartoum said the decision is part of its commitment to the international Non-Proliferation Treaty and sanctions against Pyongyang. The Foreign ministry said it had also set up a committee to implement United Nations Security Council sanctions against Pyongyang. The United States has been stepping up pressure on Sudan to cut all ties with North Korea. The US lifted 20 years of sanctions on Sudan in October but kept it on a list of "state sponsors of terrorism" along with North Korea, Iran and Syria. The move looked set to help Sudan's ailing economy, but it has been hit hard by surging inflation and no significant increase in foreign investment. Sudanese officials say that having Khartoum on Washington's "terrorism" blacklist makes international banks wary of doing business in Sudan and, in turn, hampers the country's economic revival.

- **China Prescribes Own Economic Model for Nigeria's Development<sup>3</sup>**

The Chinese government has asked Nigeria to buy into some of its policies that began some 40 years ago to enable it develop sustainably. According to the Vice Director-

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<sup>1</sup> DW, 20 February 2018, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201802210325.html>

<sup>2</sup> Aljazeera, 7 June 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/06/sudan-severs-defence-ties-north-korea-180607065811805.html>

<sup>3</sup> The Guardian, 6 June 2018,

[http://allafrica.com/stories/201806060072.html?utm\\_campaign=allafrica%3Aeditor&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_content=promote%3Aaans%3Aabkgta](http://allafrica.com/stories/201806060072.html?utm_campaign=allafrica%3Aeditor&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_content=promote%3Aaans%3Aabkgta)

General, Press Bureau, State Council Information Office, Beijing, Xi Yanchun, this could be achieved through integration and mutual understanding between both nations. Speaking in Beijing, she noted that if her country with a population of 1.3 billion people could continue to enjoy stability and economic development through effective policies, Nigeria with a lesser figure of 198 million people should equally be able to move forward if it adopts some of the policies that have made the Chinese tick.

Yanchun stressed that stability remains the magic wand that would enable every nation develop through placing the interest of the people first as well as carrying them along in the scheme of things. Publicity of government activities and updating the citizens with positive reports in the true sense of the word, according to her, were equally important. She added that negative news nearly all the time could make the people lose confidence in government

- **President Kenyatta Flags Off Kenya's First Crude Oil Export<sup>4</sup>**

President Uhuru Kenyatta has flagged off vehicles transporting oil, clearing the way for the country to become an exporter. President Kenyatta on Sunday, 10 June 2018, flagged off four trucks carrying crude oil from oil drilling site Ngamia 8 in Lokichar, Turkana County, to Mombasa as part of the Early Oil Pilot Scheme. It is the first batch of crude oil destined for export.

The Early Oil Pilot Scheme, which will be followed by the Full Field Development phase, will enable Kenya establish itself as an exporter and provide information for future exploration and development. Mr Kenyatta observed that the production of petroleum products will enhance growth and investment opportunities for the country.

- **South Africa Elected to UN Security Council<sup>5</sup>**

South Africa has been voted onto the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member. Its candidature to represent the East and Southern African group was endorsed by Southern Africa last year and the African Union in January. The United Nations General Assembly on June 8, 2018 voted to elect Germany, Belgium, South Africa, the Dominican Republic and Indonesia for a two-year term on the Security Council starting on January 1, 2019. This will be South Africa's third term on the UN Security Council, having previously served in 2007-2008 and 2011-2012.

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[http://allafrica.com/stories/201806040201.html?utm\\_campaign=allafrica%3Ainternal&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_content=promote%3Aaans%3Aabafbt](http://allafrica.com/stories/201806040201.html?utm_campaign=allafrica%3Ainternal&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_content=promote%3Aaans%3Aabafbt)

<sup>5</sup> Africa News, 9 June 2018, <http://www.africanews.com/2018/06/09/south-africa-elected-to-un-security-council/>

- **US May Reduce Special Operations Forces in Africa<sup>6</sup>**

The United States military is likely reduce the number of special operations commandos deployed in Africa. But military officials tell VOA that a final decision on the move has yet to be made. American military experts have mixed reactions to the planned reduction. *The New York Times* first reported the plan this past week. It said the number of commandos in Africa could decrease from about 1,200 to 700 over the next three years. The proposal follows a Department of Defense investigation of an incident involving four US Green Berets. The four were attacked and killed while they were on duty in Niger last October. The investigation identified several problems, including poor training and direction by military leaders. The attack led some members of Congress to demand a smaller US presence in Africa's Sahel **region**. Some other observers have questioned the timing and the reasoning for the decision. Former commander of Special Operations Command Africa Donald Bolduc said the attack in Niger shows why the US needs to have a presence in the area.

- **Bank of Baroda to Cooperate with South Africa in Gupta Family Investigations<sup>7</sup>**

Amidst probe over alleged fraud involving the Indian-origin Gupta family and former President Jacob Zuma, Bank of Baroda (BoB), on June 9, 2018, said that it would cooperate in all investigations of the South African authorities. Guptas, who were considered close to former President Zuma, had accounts with BoB, which has got permission to close down its operations in South Africa. Bank of Baroda has cooperated with South African authorities in all investigations of matters relating to the Gupta family, including how the Guptas and their companies used their accounts at various banks in South Africa, the bank said in a statement. The statement comes a day after the Hawks unit of the South Africa police conducted a search and seizure operation at its branches.

- **Angola to Invest More than 500 Million USD in Water Sector<sup>8</sup>**

Angola will invest more than US\$500 million dollars for the rehabilitation and expansion of potable water production, a figure never before reached for the development of the sector, commented official sources quoted by the press on June 11, 2018. The national water director Lucrecio Costa told the Jornal de Angola that besides budgeted, the money exists to undertake the project known as Prodisa 2, with a fund of US\$545 million contributed by the executive, the World Bank and the French Development Agency. Applied until 2023 the project will be concentrated in

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<sup>6</sup> Voice of America, 10 June 2018, <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/us-may-reduce-special-operations-forces-in-africa/4430788.html>

<sup>7</sup> The Economic Times, 9 June 2018, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/gupta-family-case-bank-of-baroda-says-will-cooperate-with-south-africa-in-investigations/articleshow/64521201.cms>

<sup>8</sup> Prensa Latina, 11 June 2018, <http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?o=rn&id=29348&SEO=angola-to-invest-more-than-500-million-usd-in-water-sector>

six cities of the country: Huambo, Cuito, Malanje, Uíge, Dundo and Luena, although it will be developed in all the provinces with the exception of Luanda and Benguela.

- **Angola Set to Change Diamond Industry to Attract Investment<sup>9</sup>**

In an effort to woo potential investors and offset economic hardship caused by falling oil prices, Angolan President João Lourenço has announced changes to the diamond industry. Chief among those changes will be opening the channels of communication for more transparency. Angola is Africa's second-largest oil producer and the fifth-largest diamond producer in the world, but years of secrecy and bad policies have driven diamond miners away from its gem reserves. Lourenço is hoping to lure them back with his overhaul of the Angolan diamond-mining industry. "We recognize that the policies for this sector, established by us, do not best serve the interests of the country nor of the producers," Lourenço said in a speech earlier this week. "We will soon announce the new framework for the diamond industry and we believe that with this, the big diamond mining companies will return to Angola," Lourenço said

- **Angola Asks to Join Commonwealth<sup>10</sup>**

Angola will apply for membership to the Commonwealth, the community of English-speaking countries, UK Foreign Minister Boris Johnson said on his Twitter account. "It is magnificent that Angola intends to join the Commonwealth family. We welcome President Lourenço's commitment to reform, to fighting corruption and to upholding human rights. We look forward to seeing you soon in the UK," Johnson wrote. In an interview with Euronews on 1 June, President João Lourenço said: "Do not be surprised if we are thinking of asking now to join Francophonie and in a few days we are also asking to join the Commonwealth, given that, "Angola is surrounded not by Portuguese speaking countries, but by Francophone and Anglophone countries."

- **Angola and China to Relaunch Tourism Sector<sup>11</sup>**

Angola and China Chamber of Commerce (CAC) on June 1, 2018 signed a partnership agreement with the Tourism Agency (Agência Sol Turismo), with help of Sol Bank, aimed at promoting the tourism sector in the country. Speaking to Angop on Friday in Luanda, the president of Sol Bank, Coutinho Nobre Miguel, said that with this partnership, his institution intends to facilitate the acquisition of foreign exchange to cover the expenses of the Angolan businessmen who want to do business in China and promote national tourism, taking into account China's vast experience in this domain. According to him, the agreement also aims at promoting trade relations

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<sup>9</sup> Investing News, 7 June 2018, <https://investingnews.com/daily/resource-investing/gem-investing/diamond-investing/angola-to-use-transparency-to-attract-diamond-investors/>

<sup>10</sup> MACAUHUB, 7 June 2018, <https://macauhub.com.mo/2018/06/07/pt-angola-solicita-adesao-a-commonwealth/>

<sup>11</sup> ANGOP, 4 June 2018, [http://www.angop.ao/angola/en\\_us/noticias/economia/2018/5/23/Angola-and-China-relaunch-tourism-sector,2353955c-6631-455d-a20b-2f7906396f5c.html](http://www.angop.ao/angola/en_us/noticias/economia/2018/5/23/Angola-and-China-relaunch-tourism-sector,2353955c-6631-455d-a20b-2f7906396f5c.html)

between the two countries, taking into account the decline in business activity as a result of the current economic and financial crisis.

- **Botswana Cancels Plans to Sell Troubled Power Plant to Chinese Firm<sup>12</sup>**

Botswana has scrapped talks to sell a power station plagued by technical problems to a state-owned Chinese company linked to the plant's builder, an official document seen by Reuters showed. The 600-megawatt coal-fired Morupule B plant, which was commissioned in 2012 and built by China National Electric Equipment Corporation (CNEEC) at a cost of US\$970 million, has often broken down, leading to a reliance on diesel generators and imports from South Africa. Botswana has been in exclusive negotiations since November 2016 to sell the plant to state-owned China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC), which is related to CNEEC. In a notice seen by Reuters on June 8, 2018, the African country's Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Board (PPADB) said it had approved a request from the Ministry of Energy to cancel the sale tender. "The board has approved the request for authority to cancel the tender for divestment of government of Botswana and Botswana Power Corporation (BPC) financial interest in Morupule B," read the notice. Cancellation of the Morupule B tender comes after a planned US\$800 million expansion of the coal-fired power plant by Japan's Marubeni Corp and South Korea's Posco Energy stalled due to a disagreement over terms.

- **Seven Hacked to Death by Suspected Jihadists in Mozambique<sup>13</sup>**

Suspected jihadists hacked seven people to death with machetes and torched dozens of homes on June 5, 2018 in northern Mozambique, a region that has suffered a spate of similar attacks, police said. The area, Cabo Delgado province, which is expected to become the centre of a nascent natural gas industry after several promising discoveries, has seen a number of deadly assaults on both security forces and civilians since October. "The bandits used machetes to kill the seven persons. We think this group is likely part of the (one) that beheaded 10 (people on) May 27," police spokesman Inacio Dina told AFP, referring to an attack last month in the same region that was also blamed on jihadists. The assailants in a dawn raid on Tuesday burnt down 164 houses and destroyed four cars during the assault on the village of Naude in the Macomia district, the spokesman said.

- **Maasai Clash with Tanzania in Court over Eviction from Serengeti<sup>14</sup>**

Maasai herders near Tanzania's famous Serengeti wildlife park have asked a regional court to stop the government intimidating witnesses supporting their legal bid to return to their ancestral land, a lawyer for the community said on June 7, 2018. Maasai from four villages in Loliondo, on the outskirts of the Serengeti - famous for its

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<sup>12</sup> Times Live, 10 June 2018, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/africa/2018-06-10-botswana-cancels-plans-to-sell-troubled-power-plant-to-chinese-firm/>

<sup>13</sup> The Citizen, 6 June 2018, <https://citizen.co.za/news/news-world/1946323/seven-hacked-to-death-by-suspected-jihadists-in-mozambique/>

<sup>14</sup> Reuters, 8 June 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tanzania-land-court/maasai-clash-with-tanzania-in-court-over-eviction-from-serengeti-idUSKCN1J333F>



annual wildebeest migration - sued Tanzania in September for the right to return to their villages which have become part of a park. “The government is trying to intimidate the villagers to withdraw the case,” Donald Deya of the Pan African Lawyers Union, who is representing the Maasai, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation after a hearing in the East African Court of Justice.

- **Madagascar's President Appoints New Prime Minister<sup>15</sup>**

Madagascar’s president, on June 4, 2018, said that he had appointed the country’s local representative of the International Labour Organisation, Christian Ntsay, as the new prime minister. Former Prime Minister Olivier Mahafaly resigned his post earlier on the same day to comply with the terms of a court ruling that ordered the formation of a new consensus government to end a political crisis on the Indian Ocean island nation. A High Constitutional Court ordered Rajaonarimampianina to dissolve his government and appoint a new prime minister with the support of all political parties. Presidential elections are due this year.

- **Government Approves Proposed Migration and Development Policy<sup>16</sup>**

Government has agreed to the proposed Migration and Development Policy, prepared by a team of experts deputed by the European Union Delegation to Mauritius and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development. The Migration and Development Policy purports at setting out the strategic vision of Government in dealing with challenges and opportunities related to migration in a holistic and proactive manner. The overall goal, in line with Government Programme 2015-2019, is to maximise the positive outcomes and impact of migration for the socio-economic development of the Republic of Mauritius. The formulation of the Policy framework has been driven by the current and future imperatives generated by globalisation, rapid transformation of economies and societies, external and internal factors, challenges and opportunities as well as international commitments taken to promote universal respect and observance of human rights and freedom for all.

- **DRC Gives Greenlight for Use of Experimental Ebola Medicines<sup>17</sup>**

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has approved the use of experimental Ebola treatments, the WHO has said. The approved drugs, Zmapp, GS-5734, REGN monoclonal antibody combination, and mAb114, marks the first time such treatments are available amid the outbreak of the deadly virus in the country. According to the UN health agency, the trial drugs will be used in hospitals in emergency response settings “under the framework of compassionate use.” “The treatments can be used as long as informed consent is obtained from patients and protocols are followed, with

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<sup>15</sup> Africa News, 4 June 2018, <http://www.africanews.com/2018/06/04/madagascar-s-president-appoints-new-prime-minister/>

<sup>16</sup> Republic of Mauritius, 4 June 2018, <http://www.govmu.org/English/News/Pages/Government-approves-proposed-Migration-and-Development-Policy-.aspx>

<sup>17</sup> The East African, 7 June 2018, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/scienceandhealth/DRC-approval-use-experimental-Ebola-treatments/3073694-4600124-em82ca/index.html>

close monitoring and reporting of any adverse effects,” WHO said on Wednesday. Four of the five drugs approved are currently in DRC. The haemorrhagic fever has so far killed 27 people with 37 confirmed cases, 14 probable and seven suspected cases, according to WHO.

- **DRC Warlord Bemba 18-year Jail Sentence Overturned<sup>18</sup>**

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has reversed the conviction of the former Vice President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Jean-Pierre Bemba, who was sentenced to 18 years in prison for war crimes and crimes against humanity two years ago. The appeals court at The Hague on Friday ruled in a majority opinion to acquit the former warlord, finding that Bemba had been erroneously convicted. Bemba was convicted on March 21, 2016 of murder, rape and pillaging between October 2002 and March 2003, when militia troops of the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC), who were under his command were sent to neighboring Central African Republic to quell a coup attempt. Prosecutors at his trial said Bemba knew that MLC forces under his authority and control were committing or were about to commit war crimes. However, the Appeals Chamber of the ICC ruled that he could not be held responsible for crimes committed by his troops. The judges said they had found an "apparent discrepancy between the limited number of crimes within the case's scope for which Mr Bemba was held responsible" compared to the assessment of his case. But the acquittal does not mean that Bemba will walk free. Judge Christine Van den Wyngaert said he will remain in detention because of another case in which he was convicted of offenses "against the administration of justice." Human rights group Amnesty International said the ICC's ruling was a "huge blow for the many victims" who had suffered during the war waged in the central African country.

- **American Soldier Killed in Somalia<sup>19</sup>**

A US special operations soldier was killed and four others wounded in southwestern Somalia on June 8, 2018 when their team came under attack from insurgents. According to the US Africa Command, US service members were with Somali forces in an operation aimed at clearing al-Shabab, a terrorist organization, from villages and establishing a permanent combat outpost. "The U.S. provided advice, assistance and aerial surveillance during the mission," according to a statement from the command. The statement says, "One of the wounded US service members received sufficient medical care in the field. Three US service members and the one partner force wounded were medically evacuated to receive additional treatment."

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<sup>18</sup> CNN, 8 June 2018, <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/06/08/africa/congo-warlord-sentence-overturned/index.html>

<sup>19</sup> National Public Radio, 8 June 2018, <https://www.npr.org/2018/06/08/618394317/american-soldier-killed-in-somalia>



- **President Kiir of South Sudan Agrees to Meet Rebel Leader Machar for Peace Talks<sup>20</sup>**

South Sudan's president Salva Kiir has welcomed the regional bloc's proposal for face-to-face talks with rebel leader Dr. Riek Machar. The Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has been leading talks between the government and the rebels to revive the 2015 peace deal. Kiir met Ethiopia's prime minister who heads the IGAD council last week and the two leaders agreed that the regional bloc's proposal for peace is viable. President Kiir's spokesperson Ateny Wek Ateny said his boss has welcomed a face-to-face talks with Machar as the only way to forge lasting peace in the restive country. President Kiir and rebel leader Dr. Machar last meet in July 2016 when the violence erupted at the presidential palace. Dr. Machar fled the country and is currently in South Africa under house arrest. His group has previously insisted that Machar must be part of negotiations for peace and stability of South Sudan.

- **Nigeria's Army Frees 148 Boko Haram Hostages, Half of Them Children<sup>21</sup>**

Nigeria's army rescued 148 hostages, most of them women and children, from Boko Haram militants, the army informed on June 4, 2018. Soldiers rescued the hostages during an operation Sunday as members of the terror group fled "troops' onslaught in the Lake Chad Islands and fringes of the northern borders of Borno state," according to a statement. The captives were freed in the large but remote town of Bama, about 45 miles southeast of Maiduguri. Borno state in northeast Nigeria borders Niger, Chad and Cameroon, all of which have experienced violent incidents with Boko Haram. Seventy-five children, 58 women and 15 men comprised the rescued group, the army said. There were two pregnant teenagers among the hostages. The freed hostages will be transported to a Bama camp for internally displaced people, the army said.

- **Morocco, Nigeria Agree to Press on With Pipeline Plan<sup>22</sup>**

Morocco and Nigeria have agreed a cooperation plan to press on with a proposed pipeline transporting gas to the North African kingdom along the Atlantic coast. King Mohammed VI and President Muhammadu Buhari on June 10, 2018 oversaw the signing of the accord in Rabat detailing the way forward for the mega-project first agreed in 2016, Morocco's MAP news agency reported. The two countries are looking to build an extension to Morocco of a pipeline that has been pumping gas from resource-rich southern Nigeria to Benin, Togo and Ghana since 2010. "For economic, political, legal and security reasons, the choice was made for a combined onshore/offshore route," a statement said. The proposed pipeline, to be built in several phases, "will measure some 5,660 kilometres (3,500 miles)" and "respond to the

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<sup>20</sup> Africa News, 5 June 2018, <http://www.africanews.com/2018/06/05/south-sudan-president-kiir-agrees-to-meet-rebel-leader-machar-for-peace-talks/>

<sup>21</sup> CNN, 4 June 2018, <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/06/04/africa/boko-haram-hostages-freed-nigeria/index.html>

<sup>22</sup> Punch, 11 June 2018, <http://punchng.com/morocco-nigeria-agree-to-press-on-with-pipeline-plan/>

growing needs of the transit countries and Europe over the next 25 years”, the statement said.

## Central Asia

- **SCO Qingdao Summit**

China hosted the 18<sup>th</sup> Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting on 9-10 June 2018 at Qingdao. It was attended by Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of China Xi Jinping, President of Kyrgyzstan Sooronbay Jeenbekov, President of Pakistan Mamnoon Hussain, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, and President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The Summit was chaired by President Xi Jinping.

The event was also attended by SCO Secretary-General Rashid Alimov and Director of RATS Yevgeny Sysoyev. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko, Iran President Hassan Rouhani, President of Mongolia Khaltmaagiin Battulga, as well as UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, ASEAN Secretary General Lim Jock Hoi, Executive Secretary of the CIS Sergei Lebedev, Secretary-General of CSTO Yuri Khachaturov, Executive Director of the CICA Gong Jianwei, Chairman of the Collegium of the Eurasian Economic Commission Tigran Sarkisyan, Vice President of the World Bank Victoria Kwakwa, and IMF Department Director Changyong Rhee, also participated.

The ‘Information Report’ released by SCO says that the members considered implementation of the Astana Summit 2017 results and the priorities for further SCO development. It was mentioned that the members were committed to the SCO Charter’s objectives and principles and, guided by the Shanghai Spirit, were continuing to fulfil the tasks of SCO Development Strategy until 2025. It was noted that the SCO had asserted itself as a unique, influential and authoritative regional organization whose potential had grown remarkably following the accession of India and Pakistan. A Plan of Action for 2018-2022 to implement the Treaty on Long-Term Neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation between SCO Member States was approved.

The members appointed Vladimir Norov (Uzbekistan) as SCO Secretary-General and Dzhumakhon Giyosov (Tajikistan) as Director of the Executive Committee of RATS from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2021.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Shanghai Cooperation Organization, “INFORMATION REPORT following the Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Member States (Qingdao, 9-10 June 2018)”  
[file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/shos\\_090618\\_%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%84%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BC%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5\\_\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/shos_090618_%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%84%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BC%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5_(1).pdf)

## China

- **China, India to promote bilateral ties from new starting point**

President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 9 June agreed to take their April meeting in Wuhan as a new starting point to promote bilateral relations, Xinhua reported.

The two leaders reached the consensus during a meeting in the coastal Chinese city of Qingdao ahead of the 18th Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit.<sup>24</sup> After the meeting, Xi and Modi witnessed the signing of following bilateral cooperation agreements.

- (a) Memorandum of understanding between Ministry of Water Resources, PRC and Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, India upon provision of hydrological information of the Brahmaputra River in flood season by China to India. The Agreement enables the Chinese side to provide hydrological data in flood season from 15th May to 15th October every year. The Article also enables the Chinese side to provide hydrological data if water level exceeds mutually agreed level during non-flood season.
- (b) The Protocol between General Administration of Customs of the PRC and the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare of the India on Phytosanitary requirements for exporting rice from India to China. The 2006 Protocol on Phytosanitary Requirements for Exporting Rice from India to China has been amended to include the export of non-Basmati varieties of rice from India.<sup>25</sup>

- **Xi awards Putin China's first friendship medal**

Chinese President Xi Jinping on 8 June awarded his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin the first-ever Friendship Medal of the People's Republic of China. The ceremony was held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing...Friendship Medals, the highest state honor to foreigners, are presented to foreign friends who have made outstanding contributions to China's modernization drive, promoting exchange and cooperation between China and the world, and safeguarding world peace, Xi said when delivering a speech. As a leader of major country with global influence, President Putin is "an old friend" and "a good friend" of the Chinese people, Xi said.<sup>26</sup>

- **PLA Air Force "Blue Shield-18" joint air defense exercise kicks off**

A ground joint air defense exercise codenamed "Blue Shield-18" and organized by the PLA Air Force with participation of air defense units from the PLA Army, Navy, Air Force and Rocket Force kicked off at a mission area in north China on the morning of

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<sup>24</sup> [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/09/c\\_137242968.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/09/c_137242968.htm)

<sup>25</sup> <http://mea.gov.in/bilateral->

<documents.htm?dtl/29966/IndiaChina+Bilateral+Agreements+signed+in+Qingdao+China>

<sup>26</sup> [http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2018-06/09/content\\_4816393.htm](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2018-06/09/content_4816393.htm)

June 5. According to Xiang Chaoming, head of the exercise's directing group and deputy chief of the Ground Air Defense Directorate of the Air Force Staff Headquarters, this year's Blue Shield exercise highlights realistic combat training with coordination of air defense troops of multiple military services, aiming to enhance the inter-service coordinated combat capability and the commanding capability of air defense base. The joint exercise consists of drills of 10 subjects such as force projection, combat planning, and air-ground confrontations.<sup>27</sup>

- **Press communiqué issued after SCO Qingdao summit**

A press communiqué was issued after the 18th Meeting of the Council of Heads of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) held on 9 – 10 June in the coastal city of Qingdao, China. Member states emphasized that the SCO has seen continuously expanding potential for cooperation after the accession of India and Pakistan, and has become a unique, influential and authoritative regional organization, the communiqué said.<sup>28</sup>

- **Chinese, South African FMs meet over bilateral ties**

On June 4, 2018, visiting Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Lindiwe Sisulu to discuss closer bilateral relations. Wang said that the connotations of China-South Africa comprehensive strategic partnership exceed the bilateral scope and have acquired growing global influence. He called for efforts to strengthen strategic communication and political mutual trust. He also expressed hope that the two sides will enhance coordination and support for the success of the BRICS summit to be hosted by South Africa in July and the Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) to be held in China in September this year. Sisulu noted the importance of their comprehensive strategic partnership and expressed commitment to further elevating bilateral cooperation to a new height.<sup>29</sup>

- **Bulgarian, Chinese officials prepare for 16+1 CEE-China summit in Sofia in July 2018**

On June 7, 2018, the national co-ordinators for the China-Central and Eastern Europe Co-operation Initiative (the 16+1 initiative) held talks in Bulgaria ahead of the Sofia summit scheduled to be held in early July 2018. Bulgarian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Georg Georgiev said that Bulgaria was a strong supporter of the 16+1 initiative. He added that the Sofia summit would assess both the achievements of the previous period and to outline the new prospects for future development. He also expressed hope to attract significant Chinese investments in the areas of infrastructure,

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<sup>27</sup> [http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2018-06/06/content\\_4816195.htm](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2018-06/06/content_4816195.htm)

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.china.org.cn/china/Off\\_the\\_Wire/2018-06/10/content\\_51950835.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/china/Off_the_Wire/2018-06/10/content_51950835.htm)

<sup>29</sup> “Chinese, South African FMs meet over bilateral ties”, June 06, 2018, <http://www.focac.org/eng/zxxx/t1565816.htm>.

transport, agriculture, health and environment. Again, he emphasised the importance of the Hemus-Black Sea motorways and the reconstruction of the Varna-Rousse railway line. China's Deputy Foreign Minister Wang Chao proposed to upgrade the bilateral relations to the level of strategic partnership and gave assurance to encourage more Chinese firms and investors to develop business in Bulgaria.<sup>30</sup>

- **Kenya, China launch digital TV project for 800 villages**

On June 7, 2018, Kenya and China rolled out a digital project for 800 villages to get access to satellite television services. China has provided a grant of about \$8.43 million for the project which will be implemented by Chinese firm StarTimes. The Chinese Ambassador to Kenya Sun Baohong said the project will carry forward the traditional friendship under the China-Africa cultural and people-to-people plan.<sup>31</sup>

- **Asia's largest dredger Tiankun begins sea trial, to boost China's capability in island building**

On June 8, 2018, Tiankun, Asia's largest dredger, began its first sea trial to test the dredger's power system, speed and anchoring and check other components such as radar and gyrocompass. Designed by the Tianjin Dredging Company, the 140-metre-long vessel has a capacity to dredge 6,000 cubic metres per hour and can dig as deep as 35 metres under the sea floor.<sup>32</sup>

## European Union

- **Austria to Close Down 7 Mosques and Expel Imams**

Austria has decided to close down seven mosques and expel dozens of Imams who are funded from abroad. Reportedly, 60 of the 260 imams in Austria are being investigated. 40 Imams belong to the Turkish-Islamic Union for Cultural and Social Cooperation in Austria (ATIB). ATIB is considered to be close to the Turkish government. Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said, "Parallel societies, political Islam and radicalisation tendencies have no place in our country." Turkey has criticized Austria's move, President's Office called it 'Islamophobic, racist and discriminatory'.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Clive Leviev-Sawyer, "Bulgarian, Chinese officials prepare for 16+1 CEE-China summit in Sofia in July 2018", *Independent Balkan News Agency*, June 07, 2018, <http://balkaneu.com/bulgarian-chinese-officials-prepare-for-161-cee-china-summit-in-sofia-in-july-2018/>.

<sup>31</sup> "Kenya, China launch digital TV project for 800 villages", June 11, 2018, <http://www.focac.org/eng/zxxx/t1567093.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> "Asia's largest dredger Tiankun begins sea trial, to boost China's capability in island building", *The People's Daily*, June 08, 2018, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0608/c90000-9468700.html>; "Asia's largest dredging vessel begins sea trial", *Xinhua*, June 08, 2018, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/08/c\\_137240266\\_2.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/08/c_137240266_2.htm).

<sup>33</sup> Austria to shut seven 'political' mosques and expel imams, BBC, June 8, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44410597>; Austria to shut down mosques, expel foreign-funded imams, Reuters, June 8, 2018,

- **France and Germany Criticized US President Trump for Withdrawing from a Group of Seven Communiqué**

France and Germany criticized US President Donald Trump for withdrawing from a Group of Seven communiqué. President Trump announced his decision to back out of the Joint Communiqué on Twitter. Germany and France stood by the communiqué. Chancellor Merkel told ARD that President Trump's "withdrawal via Twitter is of course sobering and a little depressing."<sup>34</sup> German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said, "In a matter of seconds, you can destroy trust with 280 Twitter characters." He added that rebuilding lost trust would take much longer.<sup>35</sup>

- **Meeting of NATO Defence Ministers**

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in a press conference after NATO defence minister meeting, "We have decided further steps to strengthen our shared security. And boost defence and deterrence against threats from any direction. We are adapting the NATO Command Structure, the military backbone of our Alliance." He also stated that NATO defence ministers agreed to enhance the new command structure by more than 1,200 personnel. The new Joint Force Command for the Atlantic would be based at Norfolk, Virginia and a new Enabling Command would be based in Ulm, Germany. Two new NATO command centers in Norfolk, and Ulm would help, as he said, to "ensure we have the right forces in the right place at the right time."<sup>36</sup>

- **New Italian prime minister takes aim at migrants, austerity in maiden speech**

The leader of Italy's new populist government vowed on 5 June, 2018 to redistribute migrants in the EU and review EU sanctions against Russia, in his first policy speech to lawmakers since being sworn in. Giuseppe Conte addressed the Senate ahead of two parliamentary confidence votes expected to confirm his new cabinet, formed from a coalition of far-right and eurosceptic parties. Conte's maiden policy speech reaffirmed several of the coalition's key manifesto themes, such as a tough line on migrants. "We will strongly call for the Dublin Regulation to be overhauled in order to obtain respect for a fair distribution of responsibilities and to achieve an automatic

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<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-austria-politics-islam/austria-to-shut-down-mosques-expel-foreign-funded-imams-idUSKCN1J40X1>

<sup>34</sup> Chancellor Angela Merkel: Trump's rejection of G7 communiqué 'sobering' and 'depressing', DW, June 10, 2018, <http://www.dw.com/en/chancellor-angela-merkel-trumps-rejection-of-g7-communiqué-sobering-and-depressing/a-44150334>

<sup>35</sup> Michael Nienaber, Germany, France blast Trump over Group of Seven U-turn, Reuters, June 10, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-g7-summit-europe/germany-france-blast-trump-over-group-of-seven-u-turn-idUSKBN1J60QR>

<sup>36</sup> Press conference, by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in Defence Ministers' session, June 7, 2018, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions\\_155264.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_155264.htm); NATO defense ministers put aside tariff tensions to approve new "Four Thirties" plan, DW, June 7, 2018, <http://www.dw.com/en/nato-defense-ministers-put-aside-tariff-tensions-to-approve-new-four-thirties-plan/a-44116264>



system of compulsory distribution of asylum seekers.” His eurosceptic government was sworn in on 1 June, 2018 after almost three months of elections. Anti-establishment and nationalist parties in Italy reached a new coalition deal on 31 May, 2018 reviving their plans to take power, narrowly avoiding snap elections and setting in motion an anti-austerity government in the eurozone’s third largest economy.<sup>37</sup>

- **EU to impose tariffs on US imports from July**

The EU will impose tariffs on US imports ranging from Harley-Davidson motorbikes to jeans from next month in retaliation over Donald Trump’s decision to put duties on European aluminium and steel. Despite the apparent reluctance of the UK’s international trade secretary, Liam Fox, to publicly back the EU’s proposed “tit for tat” measures, the European commission said it had the full support of all 28 member states to act. The EU is finalising the list it will submit to the World Trade Organization (WTO) but the bloc aims to introduce “rebalancing” tariffs on about €2.8bn (£2.5bn) worth of US steel as well as industrial and agricultural products, including bourbon, peanut butter, cranberries and orange juice. The EU has also taken a complaint to the WTO. Should the case still be ongoing after three years, the EU plans to impose further tariffs of €3.6bn on US products. Trump brought in tariffs of 25% on EU steel imports and 10% on imported aluminium on 1 June, citing “national security” interests.<sup>38</sup>

- **Barnier criticises May’s UK-wide Brexit backstop plan**

Michel Barnier has warned that Theresa May’s backstop solution to avoid a border on the island of Ireland raises “more questions than answers” as he ruled out the whole of the UK staying in the customs union and key parts of the single market after Brexit. “Backstop means backstop,” the EU’s chief negotiator told a press conference in Brussels, as he insisted the UK needed to be pragmatic and accept that Northern Ireland would have to be treated differently to the rest of the country, with checks taking place on goods travelling across the Irish Sea. The backstop plan is set to snap into effect should a free trade deal or technological solution not be in place by the end of the transition period to prevent the need for a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic. The EU has suggested that Northern Ireland effectively stay in the customs union and adhere to large parts of the single market rules in such a scenario, a proposal flatly rejected by Downing Street as it would create a border within the UK. Barnier said the EU was willing to consider the prime minister’s suggestion – made in a document published on Thursday (7 June) – that the UK stay in the customs union after the transition period to avoid some checks, although he said it could not be a “time limited” arrangement. But he would not countenance the UK staying in parts of the single market, as that would be cherry-picking access. The

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<sup>37</sup> Euractiv, 6 June 2018, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/elections/news/new-italian-prime-minister-takes-aim-at-migrants-austerity-in-maiden-speech/>

<sup>38</sup> The Guardian, 6 June 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/jun/06/eu-tariffs-us-imports-july-steel-aluminium>

UK has yet to say what it would do with regard to avoiding the border checks necessary on goods travelling in and out of the single market.<sup>39</sup>

## East Asia /South-East Asia

### Korean Peninsula and Japan

- **President Trump and Chairman Kim arrives in Singapore for the June 12, Summit**

On June 10, 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un arrived in Singapore, setting the stage for their historic summit scheduled on June 12. After his arrival in Singapore, Kim Jong-un met Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on June 10. Trump will be meeting Lee on June 11.<sup>40</sup>

- **US President Trump says agreement to end Korean War could be signed**

On June 7, 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump said that he could “sign an agreement” to end the Korean War at an upcoming North Korea-U.S. summit in Singapore. “We could sign an agreement. As you know, that would be a first step,” said Trump, noting that signing such an accord to end the war would be “probably the easy part; the hard part remains after that.” His remarks, made during a joint press conference with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan at the White House following a summit meeting, came amidst speculation Moon could join the two leaders in Singapore to declare a formal end to the 1950-53 conflict. “We are looking at it,” said Trump. “We are talking about it with them. We’re talking about it with a lot of other people,” he added.<sup>41</sup>

- **Malaysia’s New PM, Mahathir Mohamad visits Japan**

On June 10, 2018, the newly elected Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad began his three day visit to Japan. The visit to Japan is regarded as an attempt to woo investors and offer business deals as he looks to cover a gaping debt hole and shift the country away from dependence on Chinese investments. The visit marks his first foreign trip after returning to power in a shock election result last month, and indicates a shift back to the 92-year-old's Look East policy to strengthen ties with East Asia, especially Japan. It is also seen as a sign of the Southeast Asian country's move away from China, which contentiously pumped billions of dollars into the scandal-tainted previous Najib Razak administration. The new government has said some

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<sup>39</sup> The Guardian, 8 June 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jun/08/michel-barnier-rejects-may-uk-wide-brexite-backstop-plan>

<sup>40</sup> "Trump, Kim land in Singapore", Korea JoongAng Daily, June 10, 2018, [koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3049180&cloc=joongangdaily|home|top](http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3049180&cloc=joongangdaily|home|top)

<sup>41</sup> "Trump says agreement to end Korean War could be signed", The Korea JoongAng Daily, June 8, 2018, [koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/Article.aspx?aid=3049096](http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/Article.aspx?aid=3049096)

Chinese companies are now under suspicion of being used to cover up the graft scandal at state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).<sup>42</sup>

- **Japan-China emergency communications system is now in place**

On June 8, 2018, Japan-China emergency communications system to avert accidental clashes in and near territorial waters and airspace has become operation. Japan and China signed a pact to begin operations of the Maritime and Aerial Communication Mechanism between their defense authorities after a summit between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang in Tokyo on May 9. The agreement has since gone through a 30-day period for both sides to get acquainted with the system. However, plans for a proposed hotline between senior defense officials are still on hold. Tokyo and Beijing have some challenging obstacles to overcome before top brass of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces and Chinese military can start using the hotline, a key component of the system.<sup>43</sup>

- **Malabar 2018- India, US, Japan joint military exercise begins in Guam**

On June 7, 2018, India, Japan and the US have begun exercise Malabar 2018 during which they will practice surface and anti-submarine warfare operations and combined carrier strike group operations off the coast of Guam island in the western Pacific. The exercise will go till June 16. 2018 edition is the first after the US renamed its Hawaii-based Pacific command as the Indo-Pacific Command. Malabar will be done in two phases: ashore and at-sea training. The harbour phase will occur at Naval Base Guam from June 7 to 10 and the sea phase from June 11 to 16 in the Philippine Sea.<sup>44</sup>

### (ASEAN, Malaysia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Phillipines)

- **Indonesia, Malaysia, and Philippines to engage in trilateral exercise for combating Islamic militants**

Indonesian Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu who met his Malaysian counterpart, Mohamad Sabu on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue stated that, Indonesia will hold a land patrol training exercise to expand the existing trilateral patrol mechanism with Malaysia and the Philippines around the Sulu Sea in order to curb the movement of Islamist militants. The trilateral military training exercise would focus on anti-guerilla warfare, urban warfare and how to tackle snipers. The patrols would focus on the porous triangular borders around the southern

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<sup>42</sup> "In Mahathir's Malaysia, Japan is back amid doubts over Chinese funding", Asahi Shimbun, June 10, 2018, [www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201806100024.html](http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201806100024.html)

<sup>43</sup> "Japan-China communications start up to avoid air, sea clashes", Asahi Shimbun, June 8, 2018, [www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201806080061.html](http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201806080061.html)

<sup>44</sup> "India, US, Japan, begin war game, exercise Malabar, in Guam", The Economic Times, June 9, 2018, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-us-japan-begin-war-game-exercise-malabar-in-guam/articleshow/64509646.cms>

Philippines, eastern Malaysia and northern Indonesia, especially around Kalimantan and Sulawesi islands.<sup>45</sup>

- **Vietnam’s National Assembly debating on a New Cyber Security Law**

The National Assembly would be introducing a bill for debate in order to introduce a new cyber security law. The assembly wants to implement this new law by June 15, which according to the authorities is needed in order to deal with public security concerns, including the fact that based on studies and statistics, Vietnam is one of the susceptible countries in the world to cyber-attacks. However, lawmakers and analysts feel that some provisions of the draft law are redundant or inconsistent with the existing Law on Network Information Safety and the Information Technology Law. Some of the provisions, for example, give greater control to the government over international digital giants like Google and Facebook. The current draft of the bill requires telecom and foreign internet service providers to maintain a “representative” office or presence in Vietnam, and also store user data in Vietnam only. This provision has caused concern to US lawmakers, lobbyists, and diplomats as well. US Trade Representative Jeremy Gerrish raises concerns about Vietnam’s proposed cybersecurity law, including the impact of localisation requirements and restrictions on cross-border services which could retard the development and growth of Vietnam’s economy. According to The Vietnam Digital Communication Association, the latest draft of the cybersecurity bill can reduce Vietnam’s GDP by 1.7 percent and wipe off 3.1 percent of foreign investment if it comes into effect. Further, views are also being expressed that the bill gives more control to government against local users posting anti-government propaganda and defamatory and slanderous content.<sup>46</sup>

- **Indonesian Foreign Minister holds first meeting with the new US Secretary of State**

The Indonesian Foreign Minister, Retno L.P. Marsudi, held a bilateral meeting with the US Secretary of State, Michael Richard Pompeo, at Washington DC on June 5, 2018. This was the first meeting between the two since Mr Michael Pompeo appointment as the US Secretary of State in April 2018. The meeting discussed efforts to strengthen the strategic cooperation between the two countries. Both sides gave attention to several priorities in the field of cooperation, such as economics, counter-terrorism measures, and defence cooperation. Minister Retno also extended an invitation to the US Secretary of State to visit Indonesia in the framework of the Annual Ministerial Strategic Dialogue, as an implementation of the Strategic Partnership. The Foreign Minister also conveyed that Indonesia would appreciate the United States’ support at the upcoming election for its non-permanent member seat at the UNSC on June 8, 2018 at the UN Headquarters. On the Palestinian issue Minister Retno reiterated Indonesia’s position in supporting the Palesinian struggle

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<sup>45</sup> Novan Iman Santosa, “Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines to conduct military exercise to curb militants”, *The Jakarta Post*, June 3, 2018, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/seasia/2018/06/03/indonesia-malaysia-philippines-to-conduct-military-exercise-to-curb-militants.html>, accessed on June 5, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Soumik Roy, “Concerns as Vietnam ponders new cyber security law”, *Asian Correspondent*, June 6, 2018, <https://asiancorrespondent.com/2018/06/concerns-as-vietnam-ponders-new-cybersecurity-law/>, accessed on June 6, 2018.

while seeking the US to give attention to the interests of the Islamic world. In addition to the Palestinian issue, the two leaders also discussed other matters, such as the situation on the Korean Peninsula and the Indo-Pacific issue. Both sides stressed the importance of communication on inclusive Indo-Pacific development, putting forward cooperation and respect for international law.<sup>47</sup>

- **President Duterte Rules out the imposition of a National-wide Martial law**

After vowing to use his emergency powers “to the hilt” against what he called rising criminality on June 6, President Duterte ruled out declaring martial law nationwide during his remarks at the inauguration of the Mactan Cebu International Airport on June 7. According to the President the imposition of martial law is not possible as it would divide the nation. Philippines is already in a state of a national emergency imposed by the government in 2016 in the aftermath of the deadly Davao blast. The President pointed out that the state of national emergency should not be equated to a martial law, like done in most countries, since Philippines has its own unique way of handling national emergency. Pointing out the issue of illegal drug trafficking, President Duterte stated that drug problem is a severe problem and despite taking strong action against it from the first day of his administration, more needs to be done. The President further added that some policemen and mayors were protecting drug syndicates and vowed to take strong action against those behind the proliferation of narcotics. Further, he also plans to place certain agencies, which are prone to corruption, under the Office of the President.<sup>48</sup>

- **Malaysian PM clarifies on the Royal Institution**

Prime Minister in an interview on June 8 stated that he is not rejecting the country's royal institution but is trying to save it. His interview comes after a Supreme Council member of Dr Mahathir's political party, Datuk A. Kadir Jasin, statement that the rulers "are guaranteed by the Constitution, lavishly provided for, wealthy and even Anwar (Ibrahim) kissed their hands!" Mr Kadir also added that "our constitutional monarch has nothing to fear if they understand their special position and stick to their duties as spelt out by the Constitution". IN the interview PM Mahathir however, stated that the nine sultans of their respective states, as titular heads, must act according to the Constitution and if any of them did something wrong, they should be subject to the rule of law. The reason for concern amongst the royal institution arises from the fact that Dr Mahathir, when he was Malaysia's prime minister for the first time, went through two constitutional crises with the rulers in 1983 and 1993. In 1983, Dr Mahathir pushed through constitutional changes that

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<sup>47</sup> “Economic Cooperation and Counter-Terrorism Strengthen Indonesia-United States Strategic Partnership”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia, June 6, 2018, <https://www.kemlu.go.id/en/berita/Pages/Economic-Cooperation-and-Counter-Terrorism-Strengthen-Indonesia-United-States-Strategic-Partnership.aspx>, accessed on June 7, 2018.

<sup>48</sup> Christina Mendez and Emmanuel Tupas, “Duterte rules out nationwide martial law, eyes other options”, *The Philippines Star*, June 8, 2018, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/06/08/1822741/duterte-rules-out-nationwide-martial-law-eyes-other-options>, accessed on June 8, 2018.

reduced the King's power to veto laws. And 10 years later, he removed the royals' immunity from criminal prosecution.<sup>49</sup>

## Myanmar

- **Government of Myanmar and United Nations Agencies sign MoU on assistance to the repatriation process of displaced persons from Rakhine State**

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MoLIP) of the Government of Myanmar and United Nations Agencies signed the Memorandum of Understanding on assistance to the repatriation process of displaced persons from Rakhine State at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre, Nay Pyi Taw, on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The signing of the MOU is the result of the invitation by the Government of Myanmar to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to assist the Government in the implementation of the “Arrangement on Return of Displaced Persons from Rakhine State”, an agreement which was signed between the Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh on 23 November 2017. Myanmar is committed to the speedy implementation of the agreement and has undertaken preparations since then<sup>50</sup>.

- **MP wants to exclude foreigner from Rakhine investigation**

A proposal urging the union government to form an independent investigation commission for Rakhine State with only local experts was submitted to the Pyithu Hluttaw by U Sai Kyaw Moe, Union Solidarity and Development Party MP for Mong Pan township in Shan State. The Hluttaw decided to discuss the proposal, which was supported by party member U Maung Myint. U Sai Kyaw Moe said that involving any foreign expert or organisation in the Rakhine investigation will complicate the situation and increase international pressure without solving the problem.<sup>51</sup>

- **Foreign countries welcome Rakhine enquiry commission**

Foreign countries welcomed the establishing of an Independent Commission of Enquiry and the Memorandum of Understanding-MoU on assistance to repatriation process between Myanmar government and the UN agencies, according to the Global New Light of Myanmar on 9 June. According to the newspaper, the governments of Japan, China and France, amongst others, have welcomed the move as an important step to improve human rights and the humanitarian situation in the troubled state

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<sup>49</sup> “Malaysian PM Mahathir addresses recent tensions with Malay rulers and their constitutional role”, *The Straits Times*, June 8, 2018, <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/pm-mahathir-addresses-recent-tensions-with-malay-rulers-and-their-constitutional-role>, accessed on June 8, 2018.

<sup>50</sup> “Government of Myanmar and United Nations Agencies sign MoU on assistance to the repatriation process of displaced persons from Rakhine State”, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018, <http://www.mofa.gov.mm/?p=11803>

<sup>51</sup> “MP wants to exclude foreigner from Rakhine investigation”, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018, <https://www.mmmtimes.com/news/mp-wants-exclude-foreigner-rakhine-investigation.html>



where violence flared following terrorist attacks on government targets in August last year.<sup>52</sup>

- **Facebook blacklists Myanmar hardline Buddhist group**

Facebook has blacklisted a group of Myanmar Buddhist hardliners including monks notorious for bilious hate speech against Rohingya Muslims, the company said Thursday, as it scrambles to show it is tackling inflammatory content. It banned the Buddhist nationalist movement Ma Ba Tha from its platform, as well as a pair of prominent monks known for stoking hatred towards the Rohingya. "They are not allowed a presence on Facebook, and we will remove any accounts and content which support, praise or represent these individuals or organisations," said Content Policy Manager David Caragliano.<sup>53</sup>

## North America

### Canada

- **Canada no longer training Kurdish troops in Iraq amid fight against Islamic State, defence chief says**

Canada is no longer training Kurdish troops in Iraq, the Canadian military's top soldier says. General Jon Vance's comments clear up confusion regarding the fate of what was once Canada's central role in the fight against Islamic State militants. Last October (2017), Canada suspended assistance to peshmerga fighters from the semi-autonomous Iraqi region of Kurdistan as well as to Iraqi government forces amid escalating fighting between both parties. The conflict last fall was over control of northern Iraq after most of Iraq's territory had been wrested back from the Islamic State. Gen. Vance, the Chief of Canada's Defence Staff, told reporters that Canada is now committed to training only Iraqi government forces.<sup>54</sup>

- **Canada will retaliate against US tariffs: Justin Trudeau**

Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau confirmed after the G7 summit he had warned Donald Trump his country would impose retaliatory tariffs on US goods from July 1. Trudeau denounced Trump's decision to invoke national security concerns to impose tariffs on aluminium and steel as "insulting" to the Canadian war veterans who had fought alongside US allies. And he said he told Trump "it would be with regret but it would be with absolute clarity and firmness that we move forward with

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<sup>52</sup> Foreign countries welcome Rakhine enquiry commission, 9 June 2018, <http://www.mizzima.com/news-domestic/foreign-countries-welcome-rakhine-enquiry-commission>

<sup>53</sup> Facebook blacklists Myanmar hardline Buddhist group, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2018, <http://www.mizzima.com/news-domestic/facebook-blacklists-myanmar-hardline-buddhist-group>

<sup>54</sup> Steven Chase, "Canada no longer training Kurdish troops in Iraq amid fight against Islamic State, defence chief says," <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-canada-no-longer-training-kurdish-troops-in-iraq-amid-fight-against/>, Accessed on 11 June 2018.

retaliatory measures on July 1, applying equivalent tariffs to the ones that the Americans have unjustly applied to us."<sup>55</sup>

## The United States

- **Divided by Trump, NATO finds unity in deterring Russia**

NATO defense ministers rallied around their latest plans to contain Russia on Thursday, while keeping a lid on their frustrations over new steel tariffs that U.S. President Donald Trump has justified on national security grounds. Briefly putting aside what NATO's chief said were "serious differences" within the alliance, defense ministers agreed a plan to protect the North Atlantic against increased Russian naval strength, move troops more quickly across Europe and have more combat-ready battalions, ships and planes. German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen said there were "controversial issues" but that "the atmosphere and our cooperation here in the alliance are full of trust." At the first meeting in NATO's new glass and steel headquarters, U.S. Defence Secretary Jim Mattis appeared relaxed and smiling in parts of the closed-door meetings broadcast to reporters but he did not speak publicly at NATO. One alliance diplomat told Reuters that in preparatory meetings, Trump's decision to target Europe on trade and Iran was absent from debates in an attempt to preserve unity, but that there were "elephants in the room". Trump's "America first" rhetoric and inconsistent statements on NATO have morphed into policy that directly challenges European priorities, the diplomats said, citing new U.S. metal tariffs and Trump's withdrawal from the Paris climate change accord and the 2015 Iran nuclear accord. A second NATO diplomat described the U.S. president as an unknown quantity with a lack of interest in the transatlantic ties that Europe and Canada cherish.<sup>56</sup>

- **Trump torpedoes G7 effort to ease trade spat, threatens auto tariffs**

U.S. President Donald Trump threw the G7's efforts to show a united front into disarray after taking aim at Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, adding he might double down on import tariffs by hitting the sensitive auto industry. Having left the Group of Seven summit in Canada early, Trump's announcement that he was backing out of the joint communique torpedoed what appeared to be a fragile consensus on the trade dispute between Washington and its top allies. The communique, which appeared to have papered over the cracks that have surfaced in the G7, said the leaders of the United States, Canada, Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Japan agreed on the need for "free, fair, and mutually beneficial trade" and the importance of fighting protectionism. "PM Justin Trudeau of Canada acted so meek and mild during

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<sup>55</sup> PTI, "Canada will retaliate against US tariffs: Justin Trudeau," <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/business/canada-will-retaliate-against-us-tariffs-justin-trudeau/articleshow/64525953.cms> Accessed on 11 June 2018.

<sup>56</sup> Robin Emmott, Idrees Ali, "Divided by Trump, NATO finds unity in deterring Russia," <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-defence/divided-by-trump-nato-finds-unity-in-deterring-russia-idUSKCN1J31H3>, Accessed on 11 June 2018.

our @G7 meetings only to give a news conference after I left saying that, 'US Tariffs were kind of insulting' and he 'will not be pushed around.' Very dishonest & weak. Our Tariffs are in response to his of 270% on dairy!" the U.S. president tweeted. In his press conference, Trudeau had spoken of retaliatory measures that Canada would take next month in response to Trump's decision to slap tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from Canada, Mexico and the European Union. Trump's salvo capped a dizzying two days of controversies that began with his suggestion Russia be readmitted to the G7. Trump says his tariffs are meant to protect U.S. industry and workers from unfair international competition as part of his "America First" agenda. The prospect that he could be moving toward an even greater protectionist trade policy is likely to chill financial markets worried about tit-for-tit escalation that could lead to a full-blown global trade war.<sup>57</sup>

- **India Also Hit As Trump Shoots In All Directions Over Trade Tariffs At G7**

Donald Trump, in a tirade against countries he said are "robbing" the US, targeted India once again on import tariffs, as he left the G-7 summit in Canada on bitter terms. "This isn't just G7. I mean, we have India, where some of the tariffs are 100 per cent. A hundred per cent. And we charge nothing. We can't do that," Mr Trump said as he threatened to stop doing trade with countries "who are being unfair" to the US. Earlier this year, Mr Trump had criticised India over import duty on the iconic Harley-Davidson motorcycles and had threatened to increase the import tariff on "thousands and thousands" of Indian motorcycles to the US. Pitching for a "reciprocal tax" on countries that he said "abuse" their trade relationships with the US, he put out a sharp message: "So I say we should have reciprocal taxes for a case like that. I'm not blaming India. I think it's great that they can get away with it. I don't know why people allowed them to get away with it. But there's an example that's very unfair. And I think we should have a reciprocal tax."<sup>58</sup>

- **Trump-Kim summit: Trump may struggle to isolate North Korea again**

Across the region, there are signs that US President Donald Trump's campaign of "maximum pressure" on Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons is weakening ahead of his summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore. Trump, along with leaders like South Korea's President Moon Jae In, have credited the pressure campaign with bringing Kim to the negotiating table through a combination of international sanctions, political isolation, and threats of military action. However, unless there is a major provocation or resumption of nuclear testing or missile launches by North Korea, strategists and academics say it is unlikely that maximum pressure will ever fully return. "Trump's campaign is over," said Kim Hyun Wook, a professor at the Korea National Diplomatic Academy. "The diplomatic openings with North Korea have already been taking a toll on the maximum pressure campaign."

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<sup>57</sup> Roberta Rampton, Jean-Baptiste Vey, "Trump torpedoes G7 effort to ease trade spat, threatens auto tariffs," <https://in.reuters.com/article/us-g7-summit/trump-torpedoes-g7-effort-to-ease-trade-spat-threatens-auto-tariffs-idINKCN1J50H3>, Accessed on 11 June 2018.

<sup>58</sup> NDTV, "India Also Hit As Trump Shoots In All Directions Over Trade Tariffs At G7," <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/g7-fallout-india-also-hit-as-donald-trump-shoots-in-all-directions-over-trade-tariffs-1865469>, Accessed on 11 June 2018.

Trump has himself said he doesn't want to use the term "maximum pressure" anymore because of improving relations with North Korea.<sup>59</sup>

## Mexico

- **Mexico leftist's pitch to Trump: growth, not walls to fix migration**

The politician leading the race to be Mexico's next leader said he wants to broker a deal with U.S. President Donald Trump to stem illegal immigration through jobs and development rather than a border wall. Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, the favorite to win Mexico's July 1 presidential election, said he hoped to craft a deal with Trump similar to the "Alliance for Progress", an aid plan launched in 1961 by then-president John F. Kennedy to help Latin America. Aides to Lopez Obrador, a leftist former mayor of Mexico City, say he thinks he can find common ground with Trump over migration, which has fueled tensions between the two countries. For months the Mexican candidate has been working on his plan to improve wages and create better conditions for Mexican workers. It must also raise living standards in Central America and create more job opportunities there, said Lopez Obrador, 64. Skeptics, however, doubt Lopez Obrador could persuade Trump to abandon his proposed border wall, a signature campaign pledge that fires up his political base, or that Trump would embrace a program to create employment in Mexico, which the U.S. president accuses of stealing American jobs. Part of Lopez Obrador's pitch, aides say, rests on his willingness to say the buck stops with him.<sup>60</sup>

- **Mexico imposes tariffs on \$3 billion worth of US exports**

In retaliation for the Trump administration announcing tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from Mexico and much of the rest of the world, Mexico Tuesday imposed a series of tariffs against US exports to its market valued at \$3 billion. They'll hike the price of products including pork, apples, potatoes, bourbon as well as different types of cheese. The tariffs range between 15% and 25%, and could raise the price of US goods by that amount, cutting deeply into US exports to its neighbour. In addition to the agricultural products and bourbon, Mexico imposed tariffs on a variety of US steel products exports. While Mexico exports more goods and services to the US than it buys, it is also the second largest market for US exports, buying \$277 billion worth of US goods and services last year, according to the Commerce Department. That put it behind only Canada in terms of the value of US exports. The tariffs imposed will

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<sup>59</sup> The Strait Times, "Trump-Kim summit: Trump may struggle to isolate North Korea again," <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/trump-kim-summit-trump-may-struggle-to-isolate-north-korea-again>, Accessed on 11 June 2018.

<sup>60</sup> Dace Graham, "Mexico leftist's pitch to Trump: growth, not walls to fix migration," <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mexico-election/mexico-leftists-pitch-to-trump-growth-not-walls-to-fix-migration-idUSKBN1J611I>, Accessed on 11 June 2018.

affect just more than 1% of US exports to Mexico. But they'll have a significant impact on the targeted US industries.<sup>61</sup>

## Latin America and the Caribbean

### Argentina

- **Argentina looks set to get a \$50 billion bailout — the biggest loan in the IMF's history**

Argentina looks poised to get the biggest International Monetary Fund bailout in history. The IMF reached a staff-level agreement to offer Argentina, which requested aid last month when its currency hit an all-time low, a \$50 billion loan as part of a three-year standby program. The credit line seeks to rein in soaring twin deficits in the country and prop up the Argentine peso. Investors have been pulling cash out of the country, and the Argentine peso has fallen more than 36% versus the US dollar this year, even amid aggressive contractionary policies. The Central Bank of Argentina raised rates three times last month to 40%. Meanwhile, the government recently announced hefty spending cuts and increases in utility prices. As part of the deal, the Argentine government is asked to ramp up those spending cuts and end central-bank financing of the federal deficit. Most notably absent from IMF stipulations is a fixed exchange rate, which many economists see as playing a central role in worsening the country's last crisis. Argentina has had a complicated relationship with the IMF, which has been blamed for worsening the country's economic crisis in 2001, mostly through eliminating a floating exchange rate. After President Macri announced negotiations with the IMF last month, nationwide protests broke out. The deal still needs to be approved by the IMF's Executive Board, which is expected to happen later this month.<sup>62</sup>

### Brazil

- **Bolsonaro stays strong in Brazil presidential race after trucker strike**

Far-right candidate Jair Bolsonaro leads the field for Brazil's presidential race in October ahead of environmentalist Marina Silva, but one third of voters do not know who to back in the most uncertain election in decades, a new poll showed. With jailed former leftist president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva barred from running by a corruption conviction, many of his supporters said they would spoil their ballot or not vote for anyone, the survey by Datafolha pollster said.

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<sup>61</sup> Chris Isidore, "Mexico imposes tariffs on \$3 billion worth of US exports," <http://money.cnn.com/2018/06/06/news/economy/mexico-us-tariffs-retaliation/index.html>, Accessed on 11 June 2018.

<sup>62</sup> Gina Heeb, "Argentina looks set to get a \$50 billion bailout — the biggest loan in the IMF's history," <https://www.businessinsider.co.za/argentina-bailout-50-billion-loan-biggest-in-imf-history-2018-6>, Accessed on 11 June 2018.

A crucial factor in the Oct. 7 election will be which candidate will be backed by Lula, who is still Brazil's most influential politician even behind bars. Datafolha found that 30 percent of voters will cast their ballot for his candidate. Right-winger Bolsonaro, a former army captain who favors easing gun controls to fight crime, appears to have gained some traction from supporting a recent truckers strike for lower diesel prices that paralyzed Brazil. He now has 19 percent of voter support, two percentage points more than in the last poll in April, while Marina Silva's backing is unchanged at 15 percent. Center-left candidate Ciro Gomes moved up one point to 10 percent and centrist Geraldo Alckmin, the former Sao Paulo governor favored by investors for his pro-business policies, remains stagnant at 7 percent.<sup>63</sup>

## Cuba

- **Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister commences Caribbean tour to strengthen relations**

Cuba's Deputy Foreign Minister Rogelio Sierra Diaz arrived at Trinidad and Tobago, the first Caribbean nation he is set to visit on his tour to the Caribbean nations to strengthen diplomatic relations. Apart from Suriname, Sierra Diaz's itinerary includes traveling to Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Guyana and Jamaica, where Cuba established diplomatic relations on Dec. 8, 1972, along with Suriname. As part of his tour, Sierra Diaz will hold meetings with Caribbean counterparts, along with the Cuban residents and Cuban state mission personnel in those countries. Through the trip that ends June 16, the Cuban minister aims to reaffirm the historic bilateral relations with the region; exchange ideas on topics of mutual interest and reaffirm Cuban solidarity to continue cooperation with the region.<sup>64</sup>

## Nicaragua

- **Nicaragua's political crisis descends into 'Dark Days'**

A surge of violence has snuffed out economic activity and dimmed prospects to peacefully resolve a political crisis here that began as a protest against tax increases and turned into a revolt against Nicaragua's longtime leader Daniel Ortega. Since mid-April, more than 100 people have been killed in confrontations with police during mass protests and what human-rights groups say are paramilitary gangs aligned with Mr. Ortega's government. The Organization of American States approved a mildly worded resolution calling for an immediate end of the violence and asking all parties to participate in peaceful dialogue. The resolution, co-sponsored by the U.S. and Nicaragua, was much weaker than declarations made Monday by

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<sup>63</sup> Reuters, "Bolsonaro stays strong in Brazil presidential race after trucker strike," <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-politics-poll/bolsonaro-stays-strong-in-brazil-presidential-race-after-trucker-strike-idUSKBN1J60R5>, Accessed on 11 June 2018

<sup>64</sup> ----, "Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Commences Caribbean Tour to Strengthen Relations," <https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Cuban-Deputy-Foreign-Minister-Commences-Caribbean-Tour--to-Strengthen--Relations-20180607-0009.html>, Accessed on 11 June 2018.



Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who accused Nicaraguan police and armed pro-government groups of killing dozens of protesters. Many Nicaraguans say they are fed up with Mr. Ortega and his wife, the unpopular Vice President Rosario Murillo, who they say have usurped democratic institutions and snuffed out political opposition. Government plans to confiscate large tracts of land to build a commercial waterway to rival the Panama Canal have cost the Ortegas rural support.<sup>65</sup>

## Venezuela

- **Maduro pardons Venezuela's political prisoners**

Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro has said he has granted pardon to those considered political prisoners in the country, some of whom have already been released, as part of a reconciliation process announced by the government. Maduro claimed that this move is about "measures of benefit and freedom towards the political actors involved in the violence" and in acts, he said, that were aimed at overthrowing the Bolivarian revolution. The Venezuelan President also pointed out that 80 per cent of the population supports dialogue, appeasement, reconciliation and reunification - the very reasons why his government is pursuing the measure of granting pardons. However, he made clear that "if they go back into violence, they will return to prison. Again, justice will be applied." Of the almost 100 releases announced so far by the government, only 39 correspond to "political prisoners," according to Foro Penal, the organisation that leads the defence of almost 400 such cases in the country.<sup>66</sup>

## Russia

- **Russia, India and Quad**

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi made India's first major Indo-Pacific policy statement at Singapore on 3 June, he took special care in addressing Russian concerns that President Vladimir Putin had brought up in Sochi during their informal summit. Putin had specifically raised concerns arising from the proposed Quadrilateral grouping comprising India, US, Japan and Australia. He is believed to have also underlined Chinese concerns at India's inclusion. Modi made it clear to Putin that India's meetings under various formats should not be construed as alliances, an aspect he assured would be clearer after his speech in Singapore. And this was done with a firm assurance that New Delhi does not ascribe to alliances of containment. On the question of China, however, Modi told Putin that India will pitch for a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific. In this context, India made it clear that Russia will have to distinguish its interests from that of China because Beijing has indeed destabilised the existing order in the Indo-Pacific. As for Russia-specific concerns,

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<sup>65</sup> Juan Montes and José de Córdoba, "Nicaragua's Political Crisis Descends Into 'Dark Days'" <https://www.wsj.com/articles/nicaraguas-political-crisis-descends-into-dark-days-1528235963>, Accessed on 11 June 2018.

<sup>66</sup> IANS, "Maduro pardons Venezuela's political prisoners," [https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/maduro-pardons-venezuela-s-political-prisoners-118060500127\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/maduro-pardons-venezuela-s-political-prisoners-118060500127_1.html), Accessed on 11 June 2018.

Modi told Vladimir Putin he should view India as its partner to safeguard its interests in the Indo-Pacific just like India views Russia as its key partner in central Asia.<sup>67</sup>

Russian President Vladimir Putin has named India, China and his own country as major players in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Putin said the eight-member bloc has evolved from a group that was launched to resolve border issues between China, Russia and erstwhile constituents of the Soviet Union into a powerful organisation with substantial resources. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to meet Putin on the sidelines of the Qingdao summit. If the bilateral meeting does take place, it will be their second such interaction in three weeks after the informal summit at Sochi in May. “Russia is India’s old-time friend. We share long-standing historical ties, and Mr President (Putin) is my personal friend and a friend of India,” Modi had said after a summit at the Black Sea resort of Sochi. “For the past four years, you and I stood side by side in the bilateral format and on the international stage... I am very glad that it was so. Modi also declared on Twitter: “The friendship between India and Russia has stood the test of time. Our ties will continue to scale newer heights in the coming years.” The external affairs ministry has issued a statement that said Putin and Modi are in agreement about the important role both countries have to play “in contributing to an open and equitable world order”.<sup>68</sup>

- **Russia and US**

On 4 June, President Putin signed into law counter-sanctions legislation that was drawn up by lawmakers in response to US sanctions imposed on Russia in April. Last month Putin said any retaliation against western sanctions must not hurt the Russian economy or partners that do business in Russia.<sup>69</sup>

US President Donald Trump on 8 June called for Russia to be reinstated into the group of the world’s largest economies, drawing the ire of both Democratic and Republican lawmakers and further inflaming tensions at the G-7 meeting in Canada. “I would recommend — and it’s up to them, but Russia should be in the meeting, it should be a part of it. You know, whether you like it or not, and it may not be politically correct, but we have a world to run,” Trump told reporters. “And in the G-7, which used to be the G-8, they threw Russia out. They should let Russia come back

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<sup>67</sup>Pranab Dhal Samanta, “Modi addresses Putin’s Quad concerns in Singapore”, *Economic Times*, June 5, 2018. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/modi-addresses-putins-quad-concerns-in-singapore/articleshow/64457210.cms> Accessed on June 11, 2018.

<sup>68</sup>Sutirtho Patranobis, “Vladimir Putin names India, China and Russia as ‘major players’ in Shanghai Cooperation Organisation”, *Hindustan Times*, June 6, 2018. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/vladimir-putin-names-india-china-and-russia-as-major-players-in-sco/story-mJPPPBU2fXg7VHtg2hRwKM.html> Accessed on June 11, 2018.

<sup>69</sup>“Putin signs Russian 'counter-sanctions' into law”, *Reuters*, June 4, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-russia-sanctions-law/russias-putin-signs-counter-sanctions-legislation-into-law-idUSKCN1J01IK> Accessed on June 11, 2018.

in. Because we should have Russia at the negotiating table.”<sup>70</sup> Italy’s new prime minister, Giuseppe Conte, broke sharply with the EU at his first international summit, and joined President Donald Trump’s call for Russia to be reinstated to the exclusive club of industrialized nations.<sup>71</sup>

- **Russia and Pakistan**

While speaking at the weekly media briefing, Foreign Office (FO) spokesman Muhammad Faisal said on 7 June that Pakistan and Russia have finalised a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for conducting a "feasibility study" of a planned undersea gas pipeline. The undersea gas pipeline project would eventually involve four countries - Pakistan, Iran, Russia and India. Responding to a question, he denied that the new project would replace the stalled Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project.<sup>72</sup>

- **Russia and Austria**

Speaking in Austria on 5 June, President Putin said that the Western sanctions against Russia are "harmful for everyone" and it is in everyone's interests to lift them. He further said that Russia had restored stable growth, despite the EU and US sanctions first imposed in 2014 after Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea. Meanwhile, Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said his country wanted to act as a bridge between Moscow and the West. But he said he would not break ranks within the EU on the sanctions issue. It was Mr Putin's first trip to Western Europe in almost a year. Ahead of his visit, the Russian leader said Moscow was not trying to split the 28-member EU. A number of European liberals have expressed concern over close links between the pro-Putin United Russia party and far-right parties in the EU.<sup>73</sup>

## South Asia

### Afghanistan

- **Govt Committed to Political Solution to Conflict: Ghani**

At the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of Council of Heads of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on 10 June 2018, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani

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<sup>70</sup>Louis Nelson, “Trump vexes allies as he calls for Russia to rejoin G-7”, *Politico*, June 8, 2018. <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/06/08/russia-g7-633705> Accessed on June 11, 2018.

<sup>71</sup>David Herszhenhorn, “New Italian leader backs Trump on Russia rejoining G-7”, *Politico*, June 8, 2018. <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/06/08/new-italian-leader-backs-trump-on-russia-rejoining-g7-633712> Accessed on June 11, 2018.

<sup>72</sup>“Pakistan, Russia finalise deal to study undersea gas pipeline project”, *ET Energy World*, June 8, 2018. <https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/pakistan-russia-finalise-deal-to-study-undersea-gas-pipeline-project/64504554> Accessed on June 11, 2018.

<sup>73</sup>“Vladimir Putin: Western sanctions 'harmful for everyone'”, *BBC*, June 5, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44364429> Accessed on June 11, 2018.

strongly rooted for political solution to resolve Taliban issues. Ashraf Ghani said, “We are witnessing the emerging of a regional consensus on the need for a stable and connected Afghanistan. On behalf of our people and government, let me thank the leaders around the table for the momentum generated and to highlight some events and measures”. Appreciating efforts of international partners such as US and EU, President Ghani added, “We gratefully acknowledge the support of our partners in the security arena through the Resolute Support mission and the developmental partners through the EU sponsored Brussels conference of 2015 and bilateral commitments. We are utilizing the generous support to change the lives of our people through consolidation of effective and efficient institution that will be accountable to our fellow citizens”. The Afghan president also stressed holding parliamentary elections in 2018 and presidential elections in 2019 in accordance with ideals of democracy.<sup>74</sup> During the meeting, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi commended Afghan President’s initiative for ceasefire between Taliban and government forces from June 12-19 on Eid and held that India would assist Afghanistan in its fight against terrorism. Russia’s President Vladimir Putin also added that a bloc consisting of China, Russia, four ex-Soviet Central Asian nations, India and Pakistan would jointly organise anti terror activities to resolve conflicts in Afghanistan for the next three years.<sup>75</sup>

- **Rouhani Expresses Support for Peace, Security in Afghanistan**

On 10 June 2018, Iranian President **Hassan Rouhani emphasized that Iran would increase its efforts to stabilise Afghanistan with a view to enhance regional peace and security.** He said, “The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready and will spare no effort to help establish sustainable peace and fight terrorism in Afghanistan. Iran is determined to expand relations with [its] neighbors, particularly Afghanistan, and run a joint venture in various development projects such as transport infrastructure.” In addition, the Iranian President hoped that cooperation between Afghanistan and Iran would reduce the production and smuggling of illicit drugs, a common threat in the region.<sup>76</sup>

- **MoMP Wraps up Assessment of Mes Aynak Contract**

Chinese Ambassador to Afghanistan Liu Jinsong focussed on investing in the Mes Aynak Copper Mine project, biggest planned economic projects of Afghanistan. According to Liu Jinsong, “Dozens of Chinese companies have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in Afghanistan. MCC will also start working here when the situation becomes stable”. Although Chinese company MCC had started exploring the mine in the year 2011, its work came to a halt when the company suggested certain recommendations to the Afghan government. Assessing all recommendations, Abdul

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<sup>74</sup> Daily Outlook Afghanistan, 11 June 2018, [http://outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=21122](http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21122).

<sup>75</sup> Daily Outlook Afghanistan, 11 June 2018, [http://outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=21120](http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21120)

<sup>76</sup> Tolo News, 10 June 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/rouhani-expresses-support-peace-security-afghanistan>

Qadeer Mutfi, spokesman of the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum said, “All items which had been recommended to us by the MCC company have been assessed from a legal, technical and economic perspective and the outcomes will be shared with the high economic council”.<sup>77</sup>

- **Afghanistan, Pakistan to Develop Strategy for Peace: Pakistan**

**During a session** Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Qingdao, China on 10 June 2018, **Pakistan’s President Mamnoon Hussain spoke of peace and stability in Afghanistan as the common goal of both Pakistan and Afghanistan. He mentioned,** “Pakistan and Afghanistan are working on a comprehensive strategy on a bilateral basis to establish peace in Afghanistan. He also viewed, “Ceasefire in Afghanistan is a positive sign for regional peace” and acknowledged Pakistan’s efforts to curb terrorism and extremism, calling for adopting measures to develop skills and capacity building activities of youth of SCO member states.<sup>78</sup>

## Bangladesh

- **Muhith aims to keep economy on even keel**

Finance Minister AMA Muhith kept one eye on the upcoming parliamentary election as he unveiled a Tk4.64 trillion budget proposal on Thursday (June 7). While it lacks the bold moves needed to steer the economy towards even firmer ground, the budget is reasonably even-handed. Although many expected a stridently political budget, the government has instead laid down a responsible proposal, so much so that most commentators are saying that there was not much to say about it.<sup>79</sup>

- **Khaleda suffered ‘mild stroke’: Physicians**

One of BNP chairperson Khaleda’s personal physicians has said she suffered a mild stroke. A four-member physician team met Khaleda Zia at the abandoned central jail on Nazimuddin Road on Saturday (June 9) afternoon. After visiting Khaleda Zia, professor of the medicine department of Dhaka Medical College Hospital FM Siddique told journalists that Khaleda Zia fell down on Tuesday (June 5). “We believe she suffered a mild stroke,” Siddique said.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Daily Outlook Afghanistan, 4 June 2018,

[http://outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=21081](http://outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=21081)

<sup>78</sup> Tolo news, 11 June 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/afghanistan-pakistan-develop-strategy-peace-pakistan>

<sup>79</sup> “Muhith aims to keep economy on even keel,” *Dhaka Tribune*, June 8, 2018,

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2018/06/08/muhith-aims-to-keep-economy-on-even-keel>, accessed on June 8, 2018.

<sup>80</sup> “Khaleda suffered ‘mild stroke’: Physicians,” *Prothom Alo*, June 9, 2018,

<http://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/news/177399/Khaleda-suffers-‘mild-stroke’-Physicians>, accessed on June 9, 2018.

- **Hasina places 4-point action plan to resolve Rohingya crisis**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the G7 outreach session proposed a four-point specific action to resolve the ongoing Rohingya crisis, including persuading Myanmar to implement the bilateral agreements with Bangladesh for safe and sustainable return of the forcibly displaced Rohingyas. She placed the four-point action seeking more support from the international community, especially from the G7 countries, at the session at Manoir Richelieu Hotel in La Malbaie on Saturday (June 9).<sup>81</sup>

- **Mamata now speaks of taking Sikkim on board for Teesta talks**

The Teesta agreement may be delayed further as the chief minister of West Bengal has proposed to include the north-eastern state Sikkim in the process, said officials who accompanied the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on her India visit last month. The chief minister Mamata Banerjee in her meeting with Sheikh Hasina proposed to remove the water reservoir built for hydroelectric power projects in Sikkim, according to the officials. Mamata claimed that the water reservoir is affecting the natural flow of Teesta in Bengal and thus causing a barrier to farming.<sup>82</sup>

- **Street movement soon to free Khaleda from jail**

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi has warned that leaders and activists of their party will take to the streets at “short notice” if their chairperson, Khaleda Zia, is not released from jail before the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr. Speaking at a press conference at the party's Naya Paltan headquarters on Sunday (June 10), Rizvi also warned that the consequences would be very bad if the government and the jail authorities do not take proper steps for treatment of Khaleda as she “suffered a mild stroke”.<sup>83</sup>

## नेपाल

- ई पी जी ने एक माह का समय और माँगा:

भारत और नेपाल की १९५० की संधि की समीक्षा के लिए दोनों देशों की तरफ से एक प्रबुद्ध व्यक्तियों के स्थापना हुई थी, जिसका कार्यकाल अगले माह खत्म हो रहा है। इसमें भारतीय पक्ष की तरफ से एक माह का अतिरिक्त समय माँगा गया है। इसके दो कारण बताये जा रहा है, पहला भारत की तरफ से

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<sup>81</sup> “G7 Outreach: Prime minister places 4-point action plan to resolve Rohingya crisis,” *Dhaka Tribune*, June 10, 2018, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/foreign-affairs/2018/06/10/g7-outreach-prime-minister-places-4-point-action-to-resolve-rohingya-crisis>, accessed on June 10.

<sup>82</sup> Raheed Ejaz, “Mamata now speaks of taking Sikkim on board for Teesta talks,” *Prothom Alo*, June 10, 2018, <http://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/news/177456/Mamata-now-speaks-of-taking-Sikkim-on-board-for>, accessed on June 10, 2018.

<sup>83</sup> “Street movement soon to free Khaleda from jail,” *Dhaka Tribune*, June 10, 2018, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/politics/2018/06/11/street-movement-soon-to-free-khaleda-from-jail>, accessed on June 10, 2018.



प्रबुद्ध समूह से एक व्यक्ति के अस्वस्थ होने के कारण और इसके परिणामों पर एक उच्च स्तरीय चर्चा की भी आवश्यकता है.<sup>84</sup>

- चीन यात्रा में मुद्दों की लम्बी सूची:

प्रधानमंत्री के पी शर्मा ओली 19 मई से पांच दिवसीय राजकीय यात्रा पर चीन जा रहे हैं। इस यात्रा के दौरान नेपाल को चीन द्वारा समर्थित और अनुदानित विभिन्न प्रोजेक्टों पर बात होगी, जिसमें दर्जनों प्रोजेक्ट शामिल हैं। इसमें मुख्यतया, रेल, सड़क, उर्जा में सहयोग तथा व्यापार और पारगमन संपर्क महत्वपूर्ण है.<sup>85</sup>

- नेपाल कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी को एक दल के रूप में मान्यता मिली:

नेपाल के चुनाव आयोग ने एक बैठक के बाद अभी हाल ही में बने नेपाल कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी को एक राजनीतिक दल के रूप में विधि अनुसार मान्यता प्रदान कर दी है। मई माह में एमाले और माओवादी केंद्र के विलय के बाद नेपाल कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी देश की एक बड़ी पार्टी हो गयी है। हालाँकि चुनाव आयोग ने इस दल से 33 प्रतिशत महिलाओं के प्रतिनिधित्व की बात कही, जो कि उनके दल में चाहिये.<sup>86</sup>

## Indian Ocean Region

- **Indian Navy completes refit of 32 year old Mauritius Coast Guard Ship Guardian**

The Indian Navy at the Naval Dockyard Mumbai has completed the refit of 32 Year old Mauritius Coast Guard Ship Guardian (MCGS) in six months.<sup>87</sup> The 'service life extension refit' of the ship was started in December 2017 at the naval dockyard, Mumbai The Indian Navy team completed up gradation in a given time.<sup>88</sup> "According to the Western Naval Command (WNC), this work was taken up to further Indian Navy's diplomatic outreach programme"<sup>89</sup>. In March 2018, as part of its Indian Ocean reach porogrammme, India provided a \$100m line of credit (LoC) to Mauritius for boosting its defence capacity.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Anil Giri, "EPG Likely to seek one month term extension", The Kathmandu Post, 4 June 2018, <https://epaper-beta.ekantipur.com/kathmandupost/2018-06-04>

<sup>85</sup> Anil Giri, "PM has lengthy China shopping list", The Kathmandu Post, 6 June 2018, <https://epaper-beta.ekantipur.com/kathmandupost/2018-06-06>

<sup>86</sup> "NCP finally gets legal party status", The Kathmandu Post, 7 June 2018, <https://epaper-beta.ekantipur.com/kathmandupost/2018-06-07>

<sup>87</sup> Indian Navy completes refit of Mauritius Coast Guard Ship Guardian, 05 June 2018, <https://www.homelandsecurity-technology.com/news/industry-news/indian-navy-completes-refit-mauritius-coast-guard-ship-guardian/> (Accessed on 11 June, 2018)

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

- **US, India talk to strengthen Indian Ocean observations**

A team of 20 scientists from America's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are in Goa to hold meeting with India's leading ocean, atmosphere, and fisheries scientists to review the collaboration in above mentioned fields and future course of action.<sup>91</sup> The atmospheric development in the Indian Ocean has a deep impact on the weather of India and other countries in the region, but also on United States of America.<sup>92</sup> Craig McLean, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Oceanic and Atmospheric Research and acting NOAA chief scientist, and leader of the visiting delegation said that the Madden Julian Oscillation is a phenomenon in the western tropical Indian Ocean which has influence on weather pattern of the US.<sup>93</sup> "There's some shallow water near the Seychelles Islands. It heats up, you get evaporation and you get this storm pattern that propagates across the Indian Ocean over Indonesia, across the Pacific and then to the United States,"<sup>94</sup> further he said. According to a media report, "the first campaign will be to sample ocean and atmospheric conditions in the western Indian Ocean, which has not been sampled since 1995. This new data will help scientists better understand how environmental changes in the Indian Ocean may be contributing to sea level rise, expanding ocean dead zones and more intense monsoons in the region."<sup>95</sup> The second campaign is aimed to understand "the role of the Indian Ocean in driving monsoons"<sup>96</sup>.

- **Indian Navy, US Navy, Japan maritime forces launched Malabar exercise 2018**

The annual Malabar exercise 2018 began in Guam on 07 June 2018. The Indian Navy, US Navy, Japan maritime forces are participating in this trilateral naval exercise. Referring the US Navy statement USNI news mentioned, "this is the first year Guam is hosting the annual exercise in which participants will practice surface and anti-submarine warfare operations, combined carrier strike group operations, maritime patrol and reconnaissance operations, and visit, board, search, and seizure operations."<sup>97</sup> Malabar 2018 between June 07 to June 16, 2018 will be done in two phases: harbour and sea. The Malabar 2018 will mainly include the US Navy aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), the guided-missile cruisers USS Antietam (CG 54) and USS Chancellorsville (CG 62), the guided-missile destroyer USS Benfold (DDG 65) and a P-8A Poseidon aircraft.<sup>98</sup> The Indian Navy will be represented by

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<sup>91</sup> US, India team up to strengthen Indian Ocean observations, 7 June 2018, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/us-india-team-up-to-strengthen-indian-ocean-observations/articleshow/64491216.cms> (Accessed on 11 June , 2018)

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> U.S., India, Japan Navies Start Malabar Exercise Tomorrow in Guam, <https://news.usni.org/2018/06/06/u-s-india-japan-navies-start-malabar-exercise-on-thursday>, ( Accessed on 11 June, 2018)

<sup>98</sup> Indian Navy, US Navy, Japan maritime forces kickoff trilateral Malabar exercise, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/indian-us-japanese-maritime-forces-trilateral-malabar-exercise-1255424-2018-06-08> ( Accessed on 11 June, 2018)

frigate INS Sahyadri, tanker INS Shakti corvette INS Kamorta, a Shivalik-class stealth multi-role frigate; and a P-8I Neptune advanced maritime patrol/anti-submarine warfare aircraft.<sup>99</sup>

## Pakistan

- **Pakistan Army Briefing**

Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations Maj Gen Asif Ghafoor at a press briefing on June 4<sup>th</sup> stressed the need for honouring the understanding announced after the hotline contact between the director general military operations of India and Pakistan. He candidly admitted that Pakistan's relations with the US were under stress. He stated that Pakistan wants peace in Afghanistan and would like to see US-led coalition forces go back after attaining success. He further denied the presence of the Haqqani network in Pakistan, but added a caveat that there might be some residual existence of the group in the Afghan refugee camps. He, therefore, repeated the demand for expeditious repatriation of the refugees. He also mentioned about the development of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity.<sup>100</sup>

- **World Bank and the Water Dispute**

The World Bank has asked Pakistan to stand down from pursuing its stand of referring the Kishanganga dam dispute to the International Court of Arbitration (ICA) and instead accept India's offer of appointing a "neutral expert". It has been reported that Pakistan believed that acceding to India's proposal of referring the dispute to neutral experts or withdrawing from its stand would mean closing the doors of arbitration and surrendering its right of raising disputes before international courts.<sup>101</sup>

- **Pakistan and FATF**

The National Security Committee (NSC) on June 8<sup>th</sup> reaffirmed its commitment to cooperate with an international watchdog tasked with countering illicit financing, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), for addressing shortcomings in the country's anti-money laundering and counter-terror financing regimes. It was the first NSC meeting that was chaired by caretaker Prime Minister Nasirul Mulk. The NSC

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Baqir Sajjad Syed, "Dialogue offer to India always on table: ISPR chief", *Dawn*, June 5, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1412084> as accessed on June 11, 2018

<sup>101</sup> Nasir Iqbal, "World Bank wants Pakistan to accept 'neutral expert' in dam dispute", *Dawn*, June 5, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1412082> as accessed on June 11, 2018

approved the presentation of the proposed plan to the FATF at its upcoming meeting.<sup>102</sup>

- **Pakistan and SCO**

President Mamnoon Hussain arrived travelled to Shandong province, China on June 8<sup>th</sup> to attend the 18th meeting of the Council of Heads of States of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Besides addressing the high-profile gathering, Mr Hussain held bilateral meetings with his counterparts from China, Iran, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and discussed ties and ways of further enhancing the cooperation. The president hailed the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) as an important and useful forum for cooperation against terrorism. Pakistan was ready to share its experiences in tackling the menace of terrorism through the SCO-RATS.<sup>103</sup>

## Sri Lanka

- **Australia to provide \$A 700,000 for demining efforts in Sri Lanka**

Australia will provide renewed support for the humanitarian de-mining efforts in Sri Lanka committing \$A700,000 in assistance over the next two years through a partnership with the Mine Action Group (MAG) and Sri Lankan organization, Devlon Assistance for Social Harmony (DASH), the Australian High Commission said in a statement. This new funding will provide vital additional mine clearance capacity in Mannar, Vavuniya and Kilinochchi Districts of the Northern Province. It will allow many families to return to their land, re-establish lives and reconstruct critical assets, the statement said.<sup>104</sup>

- **MR says public calls for Gota to be candidate being considered**

Former President Mahinda Rajapaksa says public calls for his brother to be considered as the Presidential candidate of the joint opposition at the next Presidential elections, is being considered. Responding to a question posed by this journalist over the growing public support for former Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa to be Presidential candidate, former President Mahinda Rajapaksa said that he was aware of the support Gotabaya Rajapaksa has, to be President.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Baqir Sajjad Syed, "Top security body okays plan to be submitted to FATF", *Dawn*, June 9, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1412980/top-security-body-okays-plan-to-be-submitted-to-fatf> as accessed on June 11, 2018

<sup>103</sup> "Mamnoon in China to attend 18th SCO summit", *Dawn*, June 9, 2018, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1412964> as accessed on June 11, 2018

<sup>104</sup> "Australia to provide \$A 700,000 for demining efforts in Sri Lanka", 10 June 2018, <https://news.lk/news/political-current-affairs/item/20910-australia-to-provide-a-700-000-for-demining-efforts-in-sri-lanka>

<sup>105</sup> "MR says public calls for Gota to be candidate being considered", 10 June 2018, <http://colombogazette.com/2018/06/10/mr-says-public-calls-for-gota-to-be-candidate-being-considered/>

- **EU recognizes Sri Lanka's progress in protecting and enhancing human rights**

The European Union recognizing the progress made by Sri Lanka in protecting and enhancing human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country has urged the government to address issues relating to religious and ethnic hatred and to maintain zero tolerance for hate speech and crimes. The third meeting of the Working Group on Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights under the European Union-Sri Lanka Joint Commission was held in Brussels on 5 June 2018 in the context of Sri Lanka being granted better access to the EU for its exports under the EU's Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) in May 2017.<sup>106</sup>

- **Indian Housing Project extended to Madakumbura and Vellaioya**

The Indian Housing Project has been extended to the Madakumbura and Vellaioya Estates, the Indian High Commission in Colombo. The foundation stone was laid for the construction of 250 new houses under the Indian Housing Project at the Madakumbura Estate in Punduloya, Nuwara Eliya yesterday. Minister for Hill country New Villages, Infrastructure and Community Development Palani Digambaram, State Minister for Education V.S. Radhakrishnan and Acting High Commissioner of India Arindam Bagchi jointly laid the foundation stones.<sup>107</sup>

## Maldives

- **Maldives 'disappointed' after being thrashed in UN vote**

The Maldives expressed its disappointment on 8<sup>th</sup> May after being thrashed by Indonesia in a UN Security Council seat vote. Indonesia got more votes than the Maldives in the contested election for one Asia-Pacific seat by 144 to 46, Reuters reported. The Maldives said it would continue "to champion its priorities at the UN" despite the loss. "In its 72 years of the United Nations, only 8 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have had the opportunity to serve on the Security Council," the foreign ministry said. "The Maldives is disappointed that small States are not getting the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to the international peace and security." Indonesia has previously served three terms on the UN Security Council<sup>108</sup>.

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<sup>106</sup> "EU recognizes Sri Lanka's progress in protecting and enhancing human rights", 8<sup>th</sup> June 2018, <https://news.lk/news/sri-lanka/item/20878-eu-recognizes-sri-lanka-s-progress-in-protecting-and-enhancing-human-rights>

<sup>107</sup> "Indian Housing Project extended to Madakumbura and Vellaioya", 5 June 2018, <http://colombogazette.com/2018/06/05/indian-housing-project-extended-to-madakumbura-and-vellaioya/>

<sup>108</sup> "Maldives 'disappointed' after being thrashed in UN vote", 9<sup>th</sup> June 2018, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/maldives-disappointed-after-being-thrashed-in-un-vote-138727>

- **Maldives presidential poll to be held September 23**

The Maldives presidential poll will be held on September 23, the chair of the Elections Commission said, declaring this year's ballot would be the most transparent ever. Ahmed Shareef said observers would be allowed to monitor the vote and that electoral representatives from eight countries, the European Union and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation would be invited. "Unlike previous elections this one is going to be fully trusted by the people. We will not withhold any information other than the information that has to be kept secret legally," he said<sup>109</sup>.

- **High Court upholds Chief Justice Saeed's jail sentence**

The High Court has upheld the Criminal Court's verdict sentencing Chief Justice Abdulla Saeed to four months and 24 days in prison for shutting down the GEMS system. The Chief of Justice was convicted of ordering the shutdown of the government's E-letter management system, in February. After investigating the case, the appellate court stated that there seemed no reason why the verdict against Abdulla Saeed should be changed.<sup>110</sup>

## West Asia

### Iraq and GCC

- **Iraqi High Court approves full election re-count<sup>111</sup>**

Iraq's Higher Judicial Council (IHJC) on Thursday sided with a previous vote in the nation's parliament that called for a manual recount of the contested May 12 national elections and for replacing electoral commissioners with judges to be selected in a special meeting to be held on Sunday. "Judges will be assigned to carry out the work of the Board of Commissioners and supervise the process of manual re-counting and counting of the results of the elections and the naming of judges who will manage the offices of the Electoral Commission in the governorates," said a statement released by the IHJC.

In a majority vote on Wednesday, the Iraqi Parliament decided to freeze the work of the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), assigning nine judges to run the commission to facilitate a manual recount of votes for the entire elections process across Iraq. The resolution, as ratified by the IHJC, will designate nine judges to take over the operation of the electoral commission, and oversee the recount.

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<sup>109</sup> "Maldives presidential poll to be held September 23", 8 June 2018, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/maldives-presidential-poll-to-be-held-september-23-138716>

<sup>110</sup> "High Court upholds Chief Justice Saeed's jail sentence", 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018, <https://edition.mv/news/6158>

<sup>111</sup> <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/8087ba2c-7f60-4268-bb1f-736007f9b734>

The measures include cancelling votes cast by Iraqis living abroad, those living in camps displaced from the provinces of Anbar, Salahuddin, Nineveh, and Diyala, early votes cast by security forces in the Kurdistan Region.

- **Iraqi Cleric Sadr announces disarmament initiative<sup>112</sup>**

Iraqi cleric Moqtada al-Sadr called on Friday for a nationwide disarmament campaign and announced his Baghdad stronghold, Sadr City, would be first to disarm just two days after an ammunitions cache exploded there and killed 18 people.

“Everyone must obey the orders and not stand in the way of this initiative. Everyone should hand over their weapons without any discussion because the blood of Iraqis is more valuable to us than anything else,” he told his supporters in a statement. The move appeared to be aimed at easing tensions between Sadr and the government.

At least 18 people were killed and over 90 wounded as a result of the detonation of an ammunitions cache in Sadr City on June 7, just hours after parliament mandated a nationwide recount of votes for the May election, a measure rejected by Sadr’s bloc. Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, whose bloc came in third, said storing ammunition in a residential area was a crime and ordered the Interior Ministry to investigate the incident and take legal action against those who had done so.

- **Abadi: Burning of ballot box storehouse was ‘plot against Iraq’<sup>113</sup>**

A fire tore through one of the Iraqi electoral commission’s storehouses in Baghdad on Sunday where ballots cast in the May 12 election were being held. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi described the fire as “a plot against Iraq.” He commanded security forces across Iraqi provinces to take “tough” measures to prevent similar incidents against ballot boxes.

Nine fire crews brought the fire under control on Sunday evening. Only one of the four warehouses at the site caught fire. The storehouse only contains votes cast in the Rasafa area, not other Iraqi provinces, as they have not yet been transferred to Baghdad, a source from the Iraqi Interior Ministry told Rudaw. It is not immediately clear what caused the fire.

It comes as Iraq prepares to manually recount ballot papers following allegations of widespread electoral fraud. The parliament also ordered the scrapping of all ballots cast by Kurdish security forces, internally displaced people (IDPs), and diaspora voters.

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<sup>112</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-election/iraqi-cleric-sadr-announces-disarmament-initiative-idUSKCN1J42Z4>

<sup>113</sup> <http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/10062018>



- **NATO rejects Qatar's membership ambition<sup>114</sup>**

Nato on Wednesday declined an overture by Qatar to join the Western military defence alliance, saying membership was reserved to the United States and Europe. It was responding to a comment by Qatar's defence minister on Tuesday that his country's long-term strategic "ambition" was to join NATO.

"According to Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, only European countries can become members of NATO," an official of the 29-country alliance said. "Qatar is a valuable and longstanding partner of NATO," the official said.

Speaking on the anniversary of a year-long boycott by Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Bahrain that has seen Qatar isolated, Defence Minister Khalid Bin Mohammad Al Attiyah said Qatar wanted to become a full member of NATO. "Regarding the membership, we are a main ally from outside NATO... The ambition is full membership if our partnership with NATO develops and our vision is clear."

- **UAE, Saudi Arabia announce strategic partnership in six projects<sup>115</sup>**

The United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Wednesday announced today a joint vision for economic, developmental and military integration through 44 joint strategic projects. A total of 350 government officials from different fields prepared "The Strategy of Resolve" within 12 months. The Strategy outlines three main axes: the economic axis, the human and knowledge axis, and the political, security and military axis.

The announcement of the strategy came during the first meeting of the Saudi-Emirati Coordination Council, chaired by Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, and Mohammed Bin Salman Al Saud. The leaders of the two countries have set a timeframe of 60 months to implement the strategic projects aimed at building an exceptional model between UAE and Saudi Arabia which supports the works of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

## Turkey

- **Turkey Halts Migrant re-Admission Deal With Greece**

Turkey suspended its migrant re-admission deal with Greece days after Athens released from prison eight Turkish soldiers who fled their country after a 2016

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<sup>114</sup> <https://www.ibtimes.co.in/qatars-plan-boost-defence-quashed-nato-rejects-application-771272>

<sup>115</sup> <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/region/saudi-arabia/uae-saudi-announce-strategic-partnership-in-44-projects>

attempted coup. The troops were released on June 4 after an order extending their custody expired. A decision on their asylum applications is still pending.<sup>116</sup>

- **Fate of Syrian refugees hot election topic in Turkey**

More than 3.5 million Syrian refugees in Turkey, who constitute a major part of social problems for the country, have become a topic of election campaigns ahead of the June 24 presidential and parliamentary polls. Opposition leaders call for the Syrians to go home as soon as the conditions in Syria allow, while the government maintains its welcoming attitude and even advocates Turkish citizenship for the refugees.<sup>117</sup>

- **Turkey condemns fatal terror attacks in Iraq's Kirkuk**

Turkey strongly condemned the triple bombing in Iraq's Kirkuk that left one dead and 14 others injured on 8 June, according to a statement by Turkish Foreign Ministry. In the statement reads "that some circles, who follow their dark agenda and try to harm the will of peaceful coexistence of the people of Kirkuk... still continue their attacks despite our warnings."<sup>118</sup>

- **Erdogan marks 150th anniversary of Turkish Red Crescent**

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan congratulated the Turkish Red Crescent (Kizilay) on its 150<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary. In a message to the agency's Head Kerem Kinik, he said: "Today, the Turkish Red Crescent is one of the leading institutions of the world in its field." Reminding the agency was founded on June 11, 1868 under the name of "Ottoman Wounded and Sick Soldiers Aid Society", Erdogan said it has become the hope of all victims and innocent people, and the symbol of solidarity and social cooperation.<sup>119</sup>

- **Turkey Among Signatories of Open Letter Supporting LGBT Rights in Legally-Restrictive Poland**

Ahead of Pride Week march, a record number of foreign ambassadors to Poland – 52 – have signed an open letter of support for LGBT rights in the country, up from 42 last year. They included the ambassadors of the US, Canada, Britain

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<sup>116</sup> "Turkey halts migrant re-admission deal with Greece", Al Jazeera, 08 June 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/06/turkey-halts-migrant-admission-deal-greece-180607180119740.html>

<sup>117</sup> "Fate of Syrian refugees hot election topic in Turkey", Al Monitor, 08 June 2018, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/06/turkey-elections-fate-syrian-refugees-hot-topic.html>

<sup>118</sup> "Turkey condemns fatal terror attacks in Iraq's Kirkuk", Anadolu Agency, 09 June 2018, [https://www.google.co.in/search?q=turkey&rlz=1C1CHBF\\_enIN736IN736&tbn=ews&ei=IvwdW\\_7oJY3erQGJIH4CA&start=30&sa=N&biw=1366&bih=662&dpr=1](https://www.google.co.in/search?q=turkey&rlz=1C1CHBF_enIN736IN736&tbn=ews&ei=IvwdW_7oJY3erQGJIH4CA&start=30&sa=N&biw=1366&bih=662&dpr=1)

<sup>119</sup> "Erdogan marks 150th anniversary of Turkish Red Crescent", Yeni Safak, 10 June 2018, <https://www.yenisafak.com/en/news/erdogan-marks-150th-anniversary-of-turkish-red-crescent-3413523>

and Turkey. Poland ranks amongst the lowest in Europe in granting LGBT individuals their freedoms, according to the Annual Rainbow Survey of 2017.<sup>120</sup>

## Saudi Arabia

- **UAE, Saudi Hold First Meeting of Two-Nation Council**

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have held the first meeting of their new military and trade alliance that is separate from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on 6 June in Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah.<sup>121</sup>

- **Kremlin: Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince to Visit Russia Next Week**

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman will visit Russia next week, Interfax cited Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying on 8 June.<sup>122</sup>

- **Foreign Investment in Saudi at 14-year Low Despite Reforms**

Figures released by a United Nations body show that new foreign direct investment in Saudi Arabia has plunged to 14-year low. It may give a blow to ambitious economic reforms which aim to increase inflows of foreign capital sharply. FDI inflows shrank to US\$1.4bn in 2017 from US\$7.5bn in 2016, according to figures from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which are in line with data published in recent weeks by the Saudi central bank.<sup>123</sup>

- **4. Aid ship Arrives in Sudan under Saudi King and Crown Prince Directives**

In accordance with the directives of Saudi Arabia's King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and under the supervision and follow-up of the King Salman Center for Humanitarian Relief (KSRelief), a ship carrying 458 tons of food, humanitarian and medical assistance has reached Sudan.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> "Turkey among signatories of open letter supporting LGBT rights in legally-restrictive Poland", Hurriyat Daily News, 10 June 2018, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-among-signatories-of-open-letter-supporting-lgbt-rights-in-legally-restrictive-poland-133059>

<sup>121</sup> "UAE, Saudi hold first meeting of the two-nation council", Al Jazeera, 07 June 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/06/uae-saudi-hold-meeting-nation-council-180607104149518.html>

<sup>122</sup> "Kremlin: Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to visit Russia next week", Arab News, 08 June 2018. <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1318181/saudi-arabia>

<sup>123</sup> "Foreign investment in Saudi at 14-year low despite reforms" Gulf Business, 10 June 2018. <http://gulfbusiness.com/foreign-investment-saudi-14-year-low-despite-reforms/>

<sup>124</sup> "Aid ship arrives in Sudan under Saudi king and crown prince directives", Al Arabiya, 11 June 2018. <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2018/06/11/Under-Saudi-king-and-crown-prince-orders-humanitarian-aid-ship-arrives-in-Sudan-.html>

- **Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE Approve Aid for Jordan at Emergency Gulf Summit**

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates agreed to provide an economic aid package worth US\$ 2.5 billion for Jordan, which is facing an economic crisis following anti-austerity protests. The package, announced at a summit of the four nations in the holy city of Makkah, will include a deposit in the Jordanian central bank, World Bank guarantees, budgetary support over five years and financing for development projects, said a summit communique carried by the Saudi Press Agency.<sup>125</sup>

## Israel

- **Argentinean Soccer Team and Israel**

Amid reports that June 9<sup>th</sup> friendly match in Jerusalem had been canceled following a Palestinian pressure campaign, Argentina's Foreign Minister Jorge Faurie said soccer players representing his country had harbored misgivings about playing in Israel. The Minister did not confirm the game had been axed but told reporters in Washington on the sidelines of the Organization of American States meeting that he believed players had been reluctant to travel to Israel for the game.<sup>126</sup> Later, it was officially cancelled on June 6.<sup>127</sup> There have been reports that Culture and Sports Minister of Israel Mrs. Miri Regev's insistence on holding the soccer exhibition between Israel and Argentina at Jerusalem led to the match being scratched.<sup>128</sup>

- **Israel and Germany**

Iran was clearly on top of the agenda as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin on June 4. Fielding questions from reporters, Merkel said that Germany and Israel shared the goal of preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons but disagreed on the means to that end. Merkel said that before the UN-sponsored deal Iran had been close to developing such weapons and that the deal would guarantee "more transparency." Netanyahu countered that the deal would give Iran permission to develop "unlimited" amounts of enriched uranium in the future in return for not enriching uranium now. He said

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<sup>125</sup> "Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and UAE approve \$2.5bn aid package for Jordan at emergency Gulf summit", Arab News, 11 June 2018. <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1319341/saudi-arabia>

<sup>126</sup> "Soccer match nixed after Argentina players threatened, officials say", *Times of Israel*, June 6, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/soccer-friendly-nixed-after-argentina-players-threatened-officials-confirm/> as accessed on June 6, 2018

<sup>127</sup> Ben Sales, "Why it's a big deal that Argentina canceled its soccer game in Israel", *Times of Israel*, June 7, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/why-its-a-big-deal-that-argentina-canceled-its-soccer-game-in-israel/> as accessed on June 7, 2018

<sup>128</sup> "Most think minister wrong to move Argentina soccer match to Jerusalem — poll", *Times of Israel*, June 7, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/most-think-minister-wrong-to-move-argentina-soccer-match-to-jerusalem-poll/> as accessed on June 8, 2018

that was unacceptable. But he insisted that there was "no problem at all" in communications between Germany and Iran.<sup>129</sup> Prime Minister Netanyahu warned that Iran's goal is to wage a religious war in Syria and said the Islamic Republic is trying to establish itself at Israel's "back door" in order to attack it. Netanyahu said Iran wants to deploy its Shi'ite militias to convert Muslims from the Sunni branch of Islam. He added, Iran's military presence in Syria includes 18,000 Shi'ite fighters from Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>130</sup>

- **France and Israel**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on June 5 in Paris that he did not ask French President Emmanuel Macron to withdraw France from the Iran nuclear deal because he believes renewed US sanctions against the Islamic Republic will sink the 2015 accord. In addition to the nuclear deal, the Prime Minister also raised the subject of pushing Iranian forces out of Syria. Netanyahu did urge the French leader to impose economic sanctions on Iran to help dissuade it from pursuing a nuclear weapon. Macron warned of the risk of an "escalation" in the Iranian nuclear standoff after Tehran announced plans to boost uranium enrichment capacity to pressure Europeans scrambling to save the landmark deal. He called on "everyone to stabilize the situation and not give into this escalation which would lead to only one thing: conflict." He said the international community should seek to curb Iran's ballistic missile programme through a separate deal, and not by re-vamping the existing agreement.<sup>131</sup> Macron further stated that the US transfer of its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem last month sparked deadly violence in Gaza and did not promote peace. He added that France wants to help alleviate the dire humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.<sup>132</sup>

- **Drought in Israel**

The Israel Water Authority (IWA) on June 5 stated that even though 70 per cent of the country's drinking water comes from desalination plants, the water situation in the north is severe. The country's water tables have a deficit of 2.5 billion cubic litres of water, compared to non-drought years.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> "Benjamin Netanyahu and Angela Merkel play down Iran differences", *Deutsche Welle*, June 4, 2018, <http://www.dw.com/en/benjamin-netanyahu-and-angela-merkel-play-down-iran-differences/a-44072836> as accessed on June 6, 2018

<sup>130</sup> Noa Landau, "Netanyahu to Merkel: Iran's Goal Is to Wage Religious War in the Middle East – It Must Leave Syria", *Haaretz*, June 4, 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-netanyahu-iran-seeks-to-wage-religious-war-in-the-middle-east-it-must-leave-syria-1.6140162> as accessed on June 6, 2018

<sup>131</sup> "In France, Netanyahu predicts collapse of Iran deal under US sanctions pressure", *Times of Israel*, June 5, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-france-netanyahu-predicts-collapse-of-iran-deal-under-us-sanctions-pressure/> as accessed on June 6, 2018

<sup>132</sup> "Macron: US embassy move to Jerusalem behind Gaza violence", *Times of Israel*, June 6, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/macron-us-embassy-move-to-jerusalem-behind-gaza-violence/> as accessed on June 6, 2018

<sup>133</sup> Melanie Lidman, "Desalination isn't the magic bullet, Water Authority warns Israelis", *Times of Israel*, June 5, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/desalination-isnt-the-magic-bullet-water-authority-warns-israelis/> as accessed on June 6, 2018

- **Israel and UK**

Britain's Foreign Minister Boris Johnson urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu June 6 to open an independent investigation into the dozens of Palestinians killed by Israeli troops during violent protests on the Gaza border over the past several months. Johnson condemned "incitement and rocket fire against Israel," but said that the UK was worried about the worsening situation for Palestinians in Gaza. Netanyahu told UK Prime Minister Theresa May that the dire humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip stems from the Hamas terrorist group's desire to destroy Israel, adding that Israel was doing everything it could to minimize casualties. "This is not a non-violent protest; quite the contrary," added Netanyahu.<sup>134</sup>

### International Economic Issues

- **Commerce Minister attends informal gathering of WTO in Paris**

Commerce and Industry Minister, Suresh Prabhu, attended an Informal Gathering of World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministers in Paris on May 31, 2018. Twenty-Eight (28) member countries of the WTO and the Director General of the WTO attended the informal meeting. Stating that trade must contribute to development, he said that governments in India and many other developing countries have to accord priority to addressing the challenges in the journey towards greater trade liberalisation and global integration. He cautioned that any endeavour at the WTO for reciprocal trade rules, which ignored this reality, would further deepen the divide and aggravate the disenchantment with globalisation. He said that special and differential treatment provisions for all developing countries, without exception, and LDCs are an integral part of the WTO Agreement and this principle must be protected in future agreements as well. Observing that the dispute settlement arm of the WTO was the central pillar in providing security and predictability to the system, he urged members to commence the selection process to fill the vacancies in the Appellate Body. On the recent cycle of unilateral trade measures and proposed counter measures, the Minister said that actions and counter actions such as this could stop the fragile global economic recovery in its tracks, with consequences for jobs, GDP growth and development that would harm everyone and could also irrevocably damage the rules-based multilateral system built up with hard work over many years.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> "UK foreign minister urges Netanyahu to open independent probe of Gaza deaths", *Times of Israel*, June 7, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/uk-foreign-minister-urges-netanyahu-to-open-independent-probe-of-gaza-deaths/> as accessed on June 7, 2018

<sup>135</sup> Press Information Bureau, Government of India, "Commerce Minister attends informal gathering of WTO in Paris", June 4, 2018, <http://www.pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1534266> (accessed on June 5, 2018)



- **Malaysia's Mahathir calls for review of Trans-Pacific trade pact**

In an interview with Japan's Nikkei published on June 9, 2018, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad called for a review of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement, saying smaller economies like Malaysia were at a disadvantage under the current terms. Mahathir said the trade pact, now called The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) — which includes Japan and Canada — should take into consideration the level of development of various countries, particularly “small, weaker economies must be given a chance to protect their product”. Mahathir, however, did not reject the significance of agreements such as the TPP and he did not say whether he would consider leaving the trade pact altogether.<sup>136</sup>

- **Trump trade fury torpedoes Canada's G-7 summit**

The G-7 summit held in Quebec, Canada, ended in farce and a renewed threat of global trade war on June 9, 2018 as US President Donald Trump abruptly rejected the text of a consensus statement and derided Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who was hosting the 44<sup>th</sup> G-7 Summit. Just minutes after a joint communique that had been approved by the leaders of the Group of Seven allies was published in Canada's summit host city Quebec, President Trump launched a Twitter broadside from aboard Air Force One, branding his Canadian counterpart “dishonest and weak”.<sup>137</sup> In an extraordinary interview with CNN's State of the Union on June 10, Larry Kudlow, who was present for negotiations at the G7 summit in Quebec, said Trudeau had instigated “a betrayal” and was “essentially double-crossing President Trump”.<sup>138</sup> In response, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that the EU was ready to take on the US in a trade war, and described President Trump's behaviour in the aftermath of the G7 meeting as “sobering and a bit depressing”.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup>“Malaysia's Mahathir calls for review of Trans-Pacific trade pact”, *Reuters*, June 9, 2018, <https://in.reuters.com/article/trade-tpp-malaysia/malysias-mahathir-calls-for-review-of-trans-pacific-trade-pact-idINKCN1J503T> (accessed on June 11, 2018)

<sup>137</sup>“Trump trade fury torpedoes Canada's G-7 summit”, *Business Times*, June 11, 2018, <https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/government-economy/trump-trade-fury-torpedoes-canadas-g-7-summit> (accessed on June 11, 2018); Oliver Laughland, “Trudeau 'stabbed us in back' on trade, says Trump chief economic adviser”, *The Guardian*, June 10, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jun/10/justin-trudeau-donald-trump-tariffs-g7-north-korea-summit> (accessed on June 11, 2018)

<sup>138</sup>Oliver Laughland, “Trudeau 'stabbed us in back' on trade, says Trump chief economic adviser”, *The Guardian*, June 10, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jun/10/justin-trudeau-donald-trump-tariffs-g7-north-korea-summit> (accessed on June 11, 2018)

<sup>139</sup>“G7 summit: European leaders denounce Donald Trump's ‘temper tantrums’”, *The Times*, June 2018, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/european-leaders-denounce-trump-s-temper-tantrums-bldsl2n7g> (accessed on June 11, 2018)