

Asia

North East Asia

➡ **China/Japan** Amid continued efforts to improve relations, Chinese President Xi met with Japanese PM Abe 27 June ahead of G20 summit in Osaka; at meeting Abe called for “new age of Japan-China relations”. Japanese warships 10 June spotted Chinese guided missile destroyer and combat supply ship near Okinawa, while Japan’s Defence Ministry reported seeing Chinese aircraft carrier sailing through Miyako strait in East China Sea next day. Japan Air Force 16 June scrambled jets to intercept Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) electronic warfare and surveillance plane passing through Miyako strait. Japan’s Foreign Ministry 17 June lodged protest with Beijing after Chinese maritime ship spotted conducting survey near disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands; same day, Japanese coast guard reported seeing four Chinese patrol ships around islands.

⬆ **Korean Peninsula** North Korea leader Kim Jong-un and U.S. President Donald Trump held meeting in demilitarised zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea, agreeing to restart stalled denuclearisation negotiations. During visit to South Korea, Trump 29 June tweeted invite to Kim, asking latter to meet next day at “border/DMZ”; North quickly responded. Trump and Kim 30 June met in DMZ, with Trump becoming first sitting U.S. president to set foot in North Korea. Kim said meeting was “very significant” and would have “positive influence” on future discussions, while Trump said he was “proud to step over line” into North Korea and said negotiators from both countries would meet in coming weeks. South Korean leader Moon Jae-in also present at parts of DMZ meeting. Meeting followed letter from Kim to Trump mid-June, and North Korean state media 23 June reporting Kim Jong-un received letter from Trump which Kim praised as “excellent”; U.S. Sec of State Mike Pompeo same day confirmed Trump sent letter. Earlier in month, Chinese President Xi 20-21 June visited Pyongyang and met with Kim for celebration of 70 years of China-DPRK diplomatic relations, first visit of a Chinese leader to North Korea in fourteen years. U.S. defence intelligence agency director 24 June said in interview Kim is “not ready to denuclearise”. South Korea’s Unification Ministry 5 June approved \$8mn aid package to North Korea and 19 June announced it would send 50,000 tons of rice, worth more than \$100mn, to be delivered through UN agencies. South Korea reported that during 3 June meeting in Seoul, South Korean President Moon and acting U.S. Defence Secretary Patrick Shanahan reaffirmed sanctions on North Korea must remain in place to achieve successful denuclearisation.

➡ **Taiwan Strait** Chinese defence minister 2 June warned that foreign intervention over “Taiwan question is doomed to fail” and said China would not “cede an inch” of territory. Taiwan defence ministry requested purchase of tanks and air defence systems from U.S. early June, prompting protest from China’s foreign ministry. Members of Taiwan’s main opposition Kuomintang (KMT) party attended opening ceremony of cross-strait forum, aimed at promoting exchange and integration between mainland China and Taiwan, held in China mid-June; govt criticised move and warned KMT it could face disbandment if it engaged in political

talks or signed any agreement. Canadian warship 18 June sailed through Taiwan Strait.

South Asia

➡ **Afghanistan** Intra-Afghan peace efforts continued, while violence on civilians remained high with insurgent bomb attacks and U.S. and Afghan airstrikes in numerous provinces including Ghazni, Logar, Paktika and Helmand. Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada 1 June rejected govt-requested temporary truce during Eid al Fitr religious holiday. Govt 11-14 June released 490 Taliban prisoners, first batch out of nearly 900 promised total; insurgent group praised move but claimed that only 261 prisoners were Taliban members. Seventh round of U.S.-Taliban talks began in Doha 29 June; talks followed U.S. Special Envoy Khalilzad 18 June remarks that U.S. sought “comprehensive peace agreement, not withdrawal agreement”. Violence in urban centres increased; in Kabul, Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-KP) claimed 2 June explosion that killed two people, allegedly targeting bus with members of Shiite community; two more explosions followed, wounding several; unclaimed bombing 3 June killed five govt employees. In south-eastern Ghazni province, Taliban car bomb 1 June killed seven police. In Nangarhar provincial capital Jalalabad, IS-KP suicide bomber 13 June killed nine people. In Kandahar province, authorities 16 June reported eight Taliban killed in clashes in Takhta Pul district and along Kandahar-Tarinkot highway. Taliban late June continued attacks including suicide bombers killing at least 34 in attack on govt compound in Maruf district, Kandahar 30 June. U.S. and govt forces reportedly increased night raids and airstrikes, leading to civilian casualties; in northern Kunduz province, in case of mistaken identity, U.S. airstrike 11 June accidentally killed six Afghan soldiers in response to soldiers mistakenly firing on U.S.-Afghan joint patrol; U.S. military reported two servicemen killed 26 June, in Taliban attack in Uruzgan province. UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan 9 June issued statement denouncing insurgent groups’ deliberate attacks on civilians, reporting at least 100 deaths in Kabul alone during Ramadan that ended 3 June, and urged all parties to meet obligations on civilian protection in line with international law. President Ghani 27 June visited Pakistani capital Islamabad for “wide-ranging talks”, including on Pakistan’s help facilitating intra-Afghan talks with Taliban.

➡ **Bangladesh** Security forces continued anti-militancy operations while govt criticised Myanmar over delays to proposed repatriation of Rohingya refugees. Following late May arrest of a top leader of banned Hizb ut-Tahrir and an Islamic State-(ISIS) claimed bomb that injured three in Dhaka, Minister for Home Affairs 1 June said despite increasing organisation, militants “have no capacity to carry out big attacks”; however, govt put all police units on heightened alert. Following Myanmar Minister for State Counsellor’s Office 31 May saying Bangladesh “not cooperating” with bilateral processes for repatriation of Rohingya, PM Hasina 9 June said Myanmar “in no way” wants repatriation; FM Momen 12 June criticised Myanmar for spreading “blatant lies” and failing “to keep its promises” and urged international community to increase pressure on Naypyitaw.

➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** Clashes between security forces and Maoists continued: in Jharkhand state, insurgents and security forces clashed in Gumla

district 1 June, killing one soldier and five militants, while insurgents 14 June killed five policemen in ambush in Tiruldihi; in Bijapur district, Chhattisgarh state, Maoists 23 June assassinated police officer and gunfight broke out 28 June, killing two soldiers and two children. Maoist cadres carried out targeted killings of alleged “police informers”: in Bastar district, Chhattisgarh, suspected Maoists 1 June hacked alleged informer to death; in Jharkhand, insurgents 1 June shot civilian – abducted previous day – in Lohardaga district and 5 June killed civilian in Garhwa district. Maharashtra state police arrested two top Maoist commanders, suspected of 1 May bombing which killed fifteen commandos and one civilian in Gadchiroli district, in Hyderabad 12 June. In Bijapur district, Chhattisgarh, Maoists 18 June abducted and executed local Samajwadi Party leader Santosh Punem.

➡ **Kashmir** Pakistan attempted to restart bilateral dialogue process with India, while militant attacks against security forces continued in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Pakistani PM Khan and FM Qureshi renewed offers to resume dialogue – frozen since 2016 terror attacks in India’s Punjab province that New Delhi attributes to Pakistan-based militants Jaish-e-Mohammad (Jaish) – in letters sent to Indian counterparts 8 June; Pakistani official 20 June claimed Indian PM Modi and FM Jaishankar “responded positively”; Indian officials same day rejected Pakistani account, reporting Modi stressed importance of environment “free of terror” as condition to resume talks. In J&K, militant-related violence continued. In Pulwama district, security forces 7-14 June killed six alleged Jaish militants, including two police deserters, and 26 June killed suspected Lashkar-e-Tayyaba member while explosion killed two soldiers 17 June. In Anantnag district, militants 12-18 June launched several attacks on security forces, leaving at least ten soldiers and four militants dead. Security forces 11 June gunned down two militants in Shopian district. Following May general elections and low turnout in J&K, former J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti 19 June called for ceasefire and resumption of political dialogue with all stakeholders in Kashmir.

➡ **Nepal** Govt intensified response against hardline Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) amid allegations of an extrajudicial killing. Local media reported police 20 June killed Kumar Paudel, CPN’s top leader in Sarlahi district; Paudel second CPN individual killed in alleged police action in two months; death aroused suspicions, including in parliament, of extrajudicial killing; MPs 24 June questioned Home Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa with one MP claiming Paudel may have been shot with his hands tied. CPN 24 June called nationwide strike in protest of killing; IEDs found in several places around country. Govt also received widespread criticism for proposed legislation aimed at nationalising ownership of community-based trusts – known as *Guthis*; critics claimed govt sought to commercially benefit from nationalisation while undermining religious and cultural practices of indigenous Newar community; police 9 June injured six in alleged use of force against *Guthi* bill protesters; despite govt 18 June withdrawing bill, thousands 19 June took to streets in Kathmandu in largest mass demonstration since 2006 People’s Movement. Police 7 June arrested comedian Pranesh Gautam on charges of violating Cyber Crime Act, rights activists criticised charges as dubious; Gautam released on court order 16 June.

➡ **Pakistan** Amid heightened political tensions, authorities escalated corruption probes on opposition leadership while militant attacks continued and govt continued crackdown on Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM), civil rights movement from

former Federally Administered Tribal Areas. National Accountability Bureau (NAB) 10 June arrested Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) co-chairman and former President Asif Ali Zardari on corruption charges and following day arrested Hamza Sharif, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader in Punjab Assembly; PPP and PML-N officials 15 June jointly denounced arrests as politically motivated, vowing to work together against govt. Following 26 May clashes in North Waziristan between military and Pashtun protestors led by PTM-affiliated MPs Ali Wazir and Mohsin Dawar – in which PTM claim military killed fourteen protestors, while police later arrested Dawar and Wazir – tensions increased over govt's crackdown on PTM; PPP 1 June called on National Assembly speaker to issue order to allow Dawar and Wazir to inform parliament of their version of events. Govt 2 June filed references of misconduct to Supreme Judicial Council against two independent judges, for failing to disclose foreign properties; PPP and PML-N condemned references as attempt to undermine independent judges and called for their withdrawal; leading lawyers' associations 14 June held countrywide protest calling for resignation of law minister and attorney general. Militant violence continued; in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province's North Waziristan tribal district militants 1 June killed one soldier in Boya area and 7 June killed three army officers and a soldier in Kharqamar area. In Balochistan province, explosion 6 June killed two soldiers in Harnai district; two explosive devices 7 June killed five in Ziarat district; three Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) suicide bombers 26 June attacked police station in Quetta, killing one officer. In Punjab province, Counter Terrorism Department 20 June reported killing two prominent Islamic State-Khorasan members in raid in Multan city. In Gujrat city in east, security forces 30 June raided suspected TTP hideout, killing three militants.

➡ **Sri Lanka** Fallout from April terror attack continued with public hearings into bombings and increased anti-Muslims campaigns. During public parliamentary hearings from late May to mid-June, former defence, police and intelligence officials revealed police and intelligence services had prior knowledge of Zaharan Hashim, leader of National Towheed Jamaat (NTJ) and chief organiser of attacks; testimony revealed major lapses in processing of intelligence, leading to widespread criticism of govt including President Sirisena. Sirisena 22 June extended state of emergency for further month. Security forces arrested over 1800 Muslims in connection to bombings or related incidents; over 350 remained in custody amid Muslim community leaders and detainees' families protesting that many had no connections to attacks or extremist groups. Buddhist nationalists continued anti-Muslim campaigns; senior Buddhist monk 15 June called on Buddhists to boycott Muslim-owned shops and restaurants as they would lead to sterilisation of Sinhalese; calls came after Sinhalese newspaper's May accusation that a prominent Muslim doctor – subsequently detained under anti-terrorism laws – secretly sterilised 4,000 Sinhalese women; police investigations found no evidence to support charges. Following nationalist monk 31 May launching hunger strike demanding prosecution of doctor and removal of one Muslim minister and two Muslim governors from posts, accusing them of terrorism links, Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara, leader of hardline Buddhist organisation Bodu Bala Sena released from prison by presidential pardon in May, 2 June threatened national "pandemonium" if govt did not remove politicians; next day, all nine Muslim ministers and two governors resigned, announcing govt had month to hold independent investigation into charges against the three. International community condemned anti-Muslim campaign; officials from Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in Sri Lanka 4 June expressed concern at

threats to “lives and livelihoods of Muslims”, urging govt to prevent communal violence, while EU and eight European embassies 12 June issued joint-statement expressing concern at “political and religious pressure” on Muslims.

South East Asia

➔ **Indonesia** Constitutional Court (CC) rejected bid to annul April presidential election in which incumbent President Widodo was victorious, while police arrested several suspected militants in raids. Lawyers for failed presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto 14 June officially challenged election results to CC claiming systematic fraud; head of electoral commission denied charges. Court 27 June rejected case brought by Subianto. Amid fears of pro-Subianto supporters rioting following violent protests in May, govt deployed close to 50,000 police and military personnel in Jakarta during hearing; media reported hundreds of peaceful protesters gathered outside court prior to decision. Anti-terror police Densus 88 mid-June detained 34 suspects with alleged ties to Islamic State (ISIS)-linked Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) during raids in Central Kalimantan province. Local media reported police 29 June arrested leader of Jemaah Islamiyah group in West Java province. Police 3 June arrested suspected ISIS sympathiser after failed suicide bomb attempt in Central Java, in which only suspect sustained injuries.

➔ **Myanmar** Fighting between Arakan Army (AA) and Myanmar military continued in Rakhine and southern Chin states. Clashes in Minbya township, Rakhine, 2-3 June caused civilian casualties including seven killed and seven injured when mortars struck monastery sheltering civilians. UN 10 June reported some 1,000 villagers displaced to Minbya town; further 1,000 reportedly fled villages in southern Chin state due to clashes. Military early June confirmed at least five officers, including two battalion commanders, killed during fighting between late May and early June, but rejected AA claims that over 1,100 soldiers had been killed in 2019. Govt 20 June ordered telecommunication providers to shut down internet services in nine townships in Rakhine and Chin states the following day, claiming internet was used to “coordinate illegal activities”. Lull in fighting in Kachin and Shan states continued amid military’s unilateral ceasefire, and May-agreed fragile ceasefire between two competing Shan armed groups – Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) and Shan State Progress Party (SSPP) – continued to hold. Nationwide ethnic peace process remained moribund; Karen National Union, one of largest armed groups, continued to suspend participation in formal process. Despite arrival of monsoon and dangerous sea conditions, Rohingya Muslims increased attempts to cross Bay of Bengal from Bangladesh to Malaysia, including more than 60 Rohingya found in boat beached on island in southern Thailand 11 June due to engine issues; Bangladesh govt said hundreds found trying to leave were returned to camps. Govt tensions with Bangladesh increased over issue of repatriation of Rohingya refugees: after Myanmar Minister for State Counsellor’s Office 31 May said Bangladesh “not cooperating” with bilateral processes, Bangladesh PM Hasina 9 June said Myanmar “in no way” wants repatriation; Bangladeshi FM Momen 12 June criticised Naypyitaw for spreading “blatant lies”, failing “to keep its promises” and urged international community to increase pressure on Myanmar for repatriation. Court 18 June began trial in absentia of hardline monk U Wirathu on charges of sedition relating to disparaging comments he made about State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi.

➡ **Philippines** Clashes between authorities and communist rebels continued and govt conducted raids against Abu Sayyaf militants in south. Govt troops killed vice chairman of New People's Army (NPA) 13 June in Sorsogon province; same day, suspected NPA fighters attacked police station in Mindanao province in south. Govt task force to end communist insurgency, created by President Duterte under executive order in 2018, reported NPA members 15 June killed two human rights activists in Sorsogon. In Negros Occidental, military 20 June killed two NPA militants in shoot-out in Santa Catalina town while one soldier died in clash with NPA in Manjuyod next day. Authorities early June arrested six suspected Abu Sayyaf members in separate raids in south; military announced deployment of 1,700 additional troops in Jolo to fight militants. Malaysian officials said Filipino gang members with suspected links to Abu Sayyaf militants abducted ten fishermen off Borneo island 18 June, taking them to southern Philippines; police 22 June reported that some hostages were freed in Sulu province, though total released remained unclear. Suicide bomb at military base in Jolo killed five and injured twelve 28 June; Islamic State (ISIS) claimed responsibility for attack while military said ISIS-linked Abu Sayyaf likely behind attack. Police in Cotabato province 10 June shot dead an ISIS-linked Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighter militant who had escaped detention in 2018. Security forces 15 June arrested two militants in Quezon city who took part in Marawi City siege of 2017. Filipino fishing boat sank following 9 June collision with Chinese vessel in contested waters in South China Sea (see South China Sea).

➡ **South China Sea** Tensions continued between Philippines and China after Filipino fishing boat carrying 22 fishermen sank following 9 June collision with Chinese fishing vessel in contested waters near Reed Bank; Vietnamese vessel in area rescued fishermen. Philippines govt 13 June filed protest with China, which denied its vessel hit fishing boat and abandoned Filipino fishermen; Philippines President Duterte 17 June called it "a maritime incident", accepted China's 22 June invitation to conduct joint investigation. Philippines coast guard 10 June reported spotting Chinese warship near contested Scarborough Shoal during four-day patrol. Beijing early June held military exercises near contested Paracel Islands. At ASEAN summit in Thailand, Duterte 23 June expressed "concern and disappointment" over delayed negotiations of Code of Conduct in SCS. CNN 21 June published satellite images reportedly showing at least four Chinese fighters jets deployed on contested Woody (Yongxing) Island.

➡ **Thailand** Violence in deep south continued amid stalled peace talks. Following three separate late May incidents, including two IED explosions, that killed five and wounded several in south, IED blast 3 June, on day that Ramadan ended, wounded civilian in Waeng District, Narathiwat. In Pattani's Yaring district, gunmen 9 June killed Buddhist defence volunteer, while Muslim man wounded in separate shooting same day. Gunmen 10 June shot four people in three separate attacks in Pattani and Narathiwat, killing three. Gunmen 15 June shot and killed two Buddhists in Rangae district, Narathiwat. Malaysian peace-dialogue facilitator Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor visited southernmost Thailand 11-14 June, first visit since appointment as facilitator in Aug 2018, made no announcement of renewed talks between Thai govt and Malay-Muslim separatist groups. After Democrat and Bhum Jai Thai parties formed coalition govt with pro-junta Phalang Pracharat Party late May, parliament 5 June re-elected Prayuth Chan-ocha as PM; new govt to be seated 17 July, with junta to retain authority until then.