



CrisisWatch 2024 – June Trends and July Alerts

North East Asia

➡ **China/Japan** China continued maritime activity in East China Sea, while U.S. and Japan sought to further bolster defence ties.

Beijing's maritime activity around disputed areas persisted. As of 26 June, Japan reported 104 Chinese vessels entering Japan's contiguous zone during month. Tokyo 7 June identified four Chinese Coast Guard vessels, reportedly armed with cannons, in Japan's territorial sea near disputed area off Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. In rare occurrence, Chinese coast guard vessels entered into the territorial sea around the disputed islands for five days in a row 20-24 June. Netherlands' defence ministry 8 June accused Chinese fighter jets of approaching Dutch navy frigate and helicopter in manner that "caused a potentially unsafe situation" in East China Sea; Beijing 11 June rejected accusations.

U.S. and Japan deepened defence ties. U.S. 7-18 June held biennial military exercise near Guam and Palau islands, Philippine Sea, including Japan for first time. Earlier, U.S., South Korean and Japanese coastguards 6 June engaged in first joint drill in Sea of Japan off Tango Peninsula. Japan and U.S. week of 10 June agreed to establish working groups on joint production of air defence missiles, warship and aircraft repairs and supply chain resiliency; 11 June held first such meeting on repair and maintenance of U.S. ships. Japan and U.S. officials 13-14 June discussed extended deterrence at Dialogue in Wyoming, U.S., focusing on threats from China's and North Korea's nuclear build-up and military cooperation with Russia.

In other important developments. Japan 21 June imposed sanctions on companies in India, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan for alleged support of Russia's war in Ukraine; including Chinese firms for first time for such motive.

➡ **Korean Peninsula** Russian President conducted first state visit to North Korea, signalling strengthened security partnership; in response, Seoul issued strong condemnations, including threats to arm Ukraine.

Russia and North Korea entered new strategic partnership. Russian President Putin 18-19 June paid "friendly state visit" to Pyongyang for first time in 24 years; Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un 19 June signed new bilateral treaty to strengthen "defence capabilities" and promote science and technology cooperation; leaders signed mutual defence article binding both parties to "provide military and other assistance immediately using all available means" should either party be "attacked and finds itself in a state of war", in accordance with Article 51 of UN Charter and consistent with both countries' laws; observers raised alarm over possible violations of UN Security Council resolutions by expansion of alleged North Korean weapons transfers to bolster Russian war in Ukraine, and transfers of Russian military technologies to North Korea.

Seoul responded to Russian-North Korea treaty with threats to arm Ukraine. South Korea 20 June condemned new Russian-North Korea treaty, insisting that it threatens their security and violates UN Security Council resolutions; Seoul warned that it would consider sending arms directly to Ukraine in contravention of its long-standing position of not supplying weapons to countries actively engaged in conflict. South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol 24 June called for “robust security readiness” during meeting of senior secretaries.

Tensions rose at border as sides used loudspeakers, balloons and other means to show protest. Seoul 9 June resumed broadcasting international news and K-pop via loudspeakers on inter-Korean border; move in retaliation to North Korea floating south 1,000 balloons filled with trash and manure in May. Kim Yo Jong, sister of North Korean leader 10 June warned loudspeakers could spark “very dangerous situation” and risked provoking “crisis of confrontation”. After South Korea detected two separate incursions of North Korean troops crossing Military Demarcation Line, a third saw 20-30 North Korean soldiers 18 June cross Military Demarcation Line, retreating after South Korean military fired warning shots; incidents mark pattern of behaviour that implies potential desire to slowly escalate.

➡ **Taiwan Strait Tensions remained high between Taiwan and China as U.S. approved more military support to Taipei and China maintained intense military activity around island.**

Elevated cross-strait tensions persisted. China Defence Minister Dong Jun 1 June warned at Shangri-la dialogue that any pursuit of Taiwan’s independence would be met with force, leading to “destruction”, and accused external forces of creating dangerous situation for island; 21 June ramped up pressure by issuing new legal guidelines to punish those it says support Taipei’s independence, notably threatening to impose death penalty against “diehard” separatists; Taiwan President Lai Ching-te of Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) 24 June responded by reiterating that autocracy is the real “evil”. Taiwan Mainland Affairs Council 6 June reported Taiwanese tourist detained for a few days in Fujian province, China, marking first time member of tour group was detained. Meanwhile, opposition party Kuomintang leader Fu Kun-chi 10 June criticised Lai for antagonising China and emphasised importance of maintaining friendly relations with all countries.

U.S. continued military support to Taiwan. U.S. 18 June approved \$360mn arms sale to Taiwan, including hundreds of armed drones and missile equipment. Taiwan-U.S. Defense Industry Forum 6 June held closed-door meeting in Taipei, while U.S. Pentagon 5 June approved \$3bn sale of F-16 spare parts to Taiwan. Meanwhile, G7 leaders 14 June issued joint communiqué during two-day summit held in Italy, stressing importance of “peace and stability” across Taiwan Strait, affirming support for Taiwan’s “meaningful participation in international organisations” where statehood is no prerequisite or, if it is, that Taiwan be granted observer or guest status.

China maintained military activity around Taiwan. As of 26 June, Taiwan detected 579 Chinese military aircrafts around island, of which at least 391 either crossed unofficial “median line”, entered south-western airspace or were detected within Taiwan’s de facto air defence identification zone (ADIZ). Taiwan reported 391 sightings of Chinese navy vessels in surrounding waters. Taiwanese Defence

Minister Wellington Koo 18 June confirmed sighting of Chinese nuclear-powered submarine in Taiwan Strait, surfacing near Taiwan's Kinmen Islands where it was later joined by Chinese military vessel.

South Asia

➡ **Afghanistan Taliban authorities prepared late-June high-level meeting on Afghanistan, third such international meeting convened under UN auspices; attacks by armed groups persisted.**

Taliban authorities engaged in regional and international diplomacy. Taliban spokesperson, Zabihullah Mujahid, 30 June led Afghan delegation to two-day UN-sponsored meeting on Afghanistan held in Doha, Qatar, making it de facto authority's first participation in third such international meeting which brings envoys from some 22 countries. Exclusion of Afghan women, civil society and non-Taliban stakeholders during this round sparked public criticism with calls by some activists for boycott of the meeting unless representation is widened. UN Special Representative for Afghanistan Roza Otunbayeva, 21 June confirmed Afghan women would not be included but insisted women's rights would be discussed; also said UN would meet Afghan civil society actors before and after Doha meeting. Mujahid 19 June critiqued UN's report on women's rights violations in Afghanistan, calling it biased for "attempting to tarnish perceptions ahead of the upcoming Doha meeting". Previously, Taliban Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, 4 June undertook first publicised foreign visit and met UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. UN Security Council 5 June approved travel ban exemptions for four senior Taliban members, including Haqqani, to perform Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia.

Security situation remained volatile. Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-KP) 3 June claimed responsibility for assassination of Taliban commander in Ghor province (West), signalling expansion into new province. Taliban authorities 1 June claimed arrest of IS-KP members allegedly responsible for attacks against Shia community in Herat. National Resistance Forces (NRF) commander 11 June published video claiming to have returned to Afghanistan to continue struggle against Taliban; NRF 25 June claimed that it killed six Taliban members in two attacks in capital Kabul. UN 21 June reported ongoing anti-Taliban attacks in past three months.

➡ **Bangladesh Conflict in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state continued to drive unrest in Bangladesh's Rohingya refugee camps as civilians caught in crossfire fled, searching for refuge.**

Rohingyas sought to leave Myanmar as fighting in Northern Rakhine intensified. Arakan Army 16 June warned "all residents to evacuate" Maungdaw, predominantly Rohingya town in Rakhine state. With thousands of civilians believed to be caught in violence, Bangladesh's commissioner for refugees 22 June said "...our stand is that not a single more Rohingya will enter our land"; at UN Human Rights Council Bangladesh 18 June reiterated Rohingya repatriation was "only durable solution" to forced displacement. Despite govt pledges, rising number of Rohingyas continued to find ways across, either by boat or land. Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan 20 June

warned Myanmar and AA against cross-fire, threatening retaliation if cross-border shooting persisted. Myanmar 12 June had moved two military ships into Naf River close to Bangladesh territory; Bangladesh 6-14 June suspended vessel movement between Teknaf and St Martin's Island due to fighting.

Situation in Rohingya refugee camps remained tense but armed group recruitment slowed. Three Rohingya refugees 10 June died after clashes between Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO) and Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA); Rapid Action Battalion 10-13 June arrested six ARSA members including two commanders. RSO forced recruitment in the camps declined significantly from late May, likely due to international pressure on govt and pushback from refugees. Bangladesh 9 June repatriated 134 Myanmar security forces as Myanmar repatriated 45 Bangladeshis.

Opposition announced major reshuffle, final voting of district chairs completed. Opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) 15 June reorganised 39 executive positions and dissolved multiple city committees, widely seen as unilateral move by chairman Tarique Rahman to consolidate power within party. Election Commission 5 June completed final round voting to elect district chairs; low voter turnout of just 34% was attributed to BNP boycott; despite ruling Awami League's directive, 77% of winning chairs were relatives or associates of sitting AL lawmakers.

In other important developments. PM Hasina 21-22 June visited India calling it "short but very fruitful". Police 12 June recovered body of alleged Kuki-Chin National Front (KNF) member killed in combat.

➡ **India PM Modi won relative majority in Parliament, ethnic violence spread to Manipur's Jiribam district, anti-Maoist operations continued in centre.**

Modi won elections without outright majority. Modi 9 June sworn in as PM for third term after Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured 240 out of 543 parliamentary seats, 63 fewer than in 2019. With results below majority mark of 272, Modi 7 June forced to form coalition with 14 regional allies under National Democratic Alliance umbrella, now in control of 293 seats. Opposition Indian National Democratic Inclusive Alliance won 232 seats, unexpectedly high score given pro-govt political and media landscape during campaign; main opposition party of alliance, Indian National Congress, secured 99 seats, almost doubling previous share.

Violence in Manipur ran high in Jiribam district. After Meitei farmer was found dead on 6 June, under suspicious circumstances, ethnic tensions and violence rose in Jiribam, which had so far been spared by violence. Notably, suspected militants 8 June set fire on police outpost and houses, displacing 2,000 people who sought refuge in Assam state; suspected Kuki militants 10 June ambushed police convoy on way to Jiribam, injuring one security force personnel, reportedly set fire to 30 houses and two police checkposts. In high-level security meeting, Union Home Minister Amit Shah 17 June said govt would talk to both Meiteis and Kuki-zo "to bridge the ethnic divide at the earliest". Thousands Kuki-Zo 24 June held rallies in hill districts to call for end to ethnic violence and creation of "Union territory".

Security forces continued anti-Maoist operations in centre. In Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, bombs planted by Maoist 2 and 5 June injured two. In Narayanpur district, security forces 7 June shot down seven Maoists during operation; 15 June

killed eight Maoists during five-day operation, which also left security personnel dead. In Jharkhand state's West Singhbhum district, security forces 17 June killed five Maoists. In Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, IED detonated by Maoists 23 June killed two security forces.

India-China relations remained under stress. Modi 7 June expressed desire to strengthen ties with Taiwan, after Taiwan President congratulated BJP leader on election victory; comments triggered strong diplomatic reaction from Beijing.

➡ **India-Pakistan (Kashmir) Poll results confirmed opposition candidates secured victory in Kashmir valley constituencies, authorities continued to misuse anti-terror laws, militant attacks and counterinsurgency operations persisted.**

Muslim-majority Kashmir valley rejected ruling party's proxy candidates. Official results shared 4 June indicated Ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won two seats in Hindu-majority constituencies of Udhampur and Jammu. Meanwhile, in Muslim-majority Kashmir valley, opposition party National Conference (NC) secured two seats; all BJP-backed candidates lost, as did Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah, two former chief ministers from People's Democratic Party and NC, respectively; in Baramulla constituency, people elected jailed political leader Abdul Rashid Sheikh, previously arrested in 2019 on terror-funding charges; if Sheikh is convicted, he will lose parliamentary seat and new polls will be held.

Authorities used anti-terror laws to stifle dissent. J&K administration 8 June dismissed without formal investigation four govt employees "for their involvement in anti-national activities". Authorities 14 June charged under anti-terror law novelist Arundhati Roy and former professor from Kashmir Sheikh Shaukat Hussain for public comments made at 2010 event, seen as promoting Kashmiri separatism. Kashmiri political parties 15 June condemned use of anti-terror laws to suppress dissent and criminalise free speech; 200 Indian academics, activists and journalists on around 23 June published letter demanding govt to reverse decision.

Militants launched major attack as security operations continued. In Jammu's Reasi district, suspected militants 9 June attacked bus carrying Hindu pilgrims, killing nine and injuring more than 30 people; police 19 June claimed to arrest man who provided logistical support to militants. In Jammu's Doda district, militants 11 June attacked security check post, wounding six people, including five security forces personnel and special police officer; during operation, militants 12 June injured another security personnel. In South Kashmir's Pulwama district, security forces 3 June killed two alleged militants of Pakistani jihadist Lashkar-e-Taiba organisation. In Kathua district, Jammu region, security forces 11-12 June killed two militants, soldier died during operation. In Baramulla district, security forces 19 June killed two militants during operation; 22-23 June shot down suspected militant near Line of Control. Security forces 26 June also killed three militants in Doda district, Jammu region, leaving one policeman injured.

➡ **Pakistan Authorities unveiled new security plan while insecurity in regions bordering Afghanistan and internal political crisis continued.**

Relations with Afghanistan remained tense. Amid mounting tensions with Kabul, Pakistan 22 June announced new anti-terrorism plan, Operation Azm-i-Istekham

(Resolve for Security) to counter extremism and militancy in the country. After backlash from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pashtun nationalist parties, PM Shahbaz Sharif 24 June claimed operation was “erroneously misunderstood” clarifying that it was not all-out operation that would lead to the massive displacement of people in conflict zones. At UN 18 June Pakistan called for “concerted effort” to recover weapons from militant groups like Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Normalcy returned to Chaman district in Balochistan after protests 7 June against mandatory visa regime for cross-border travel to Afghanistan turned violent. Security forces clashed with demonstrators as they attacked govt offices, injuring at least 40 people including 17 security personnel. Chaman border crossing with Afghanistan remained closed for seventh consecutive month, causing economic losses and hardship for traders.

Militant attacks and faith-based violence continued, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Officials 9 June confirmed death of seven soldiers who were targeted by roadside bomb in Lakki Marwat district in KP; military 10 June claimed to have killed 11 “terrorists” suspected in attack during overnight operation between 10-11 June in Lakki Marwat District, also in KP militants were suspected of 18 June killing of prominent local journalist. News reports 16 June surfaced about death of Pakistani Taliban commander, Abdul Manan, in Afghanistan amid reports of internal strife within TTP. Faith-based violence continued. Notably, mob 20 June killed Muslim tourist from Punjab for allegedly desecrating Quran in KP’s Swat district. Police 8 June arrested man suspected of killing two men from Ahmadiyya community in Punjab’s Mandi Bahuddin district.

Internal political deadlock continued. Islamabad High Court 3 June acquitted former PM Imran Khan and FM Shah Mahmood Qureshi in cipher case and overturned 10-year sentence. However, both faced additional charges in other cases, making likelihood of their release slim. Despite first agreeing to negotiate with govt, Khan 14 June told journalists negotiating with “powerless” govt was futile when “higher authorities” predetermined outcomes.

➡ **Sri Lanka Additional tranche of four-year IMF loan released amid improved economic climate; President Wickremesinghe’s challenge to Supreme Court provoked criticism.**

IMF authorised disbursement of new tranche of \$3bn four-year loan. Executive Board of International Monetary Fund (IMF) 12 June approved second review of Extended Funds Facility and authorised disbursement of additional \$336mn as part of four-year loan. Colombo 26 June said it had sealed agreements with bilateral creditors committee led by Japan, France and India to restructure debt of \$5.9bn. Official statistics released 14 June showed country’s economy grew by 5.3% in first quarter of 2024, considerably faster than 2% growth predicted by IMF for 2024. Govt’s plans to institute IMF-backed rental income tax by April 2025, designed to replace promised property, inheritance and gift taxes, sparked considerable uncertainty and criticism over impracticality and additional burdening of middle class, rather than wealthy groups govt and IMF said they intended to target.

President Wickremesinghe’s criticism of Supreme Court sparks controversy. In parliamentary session Wickremesinghe 18 June attacked Supreme Court’s 17 June determination that key elements of govt’s draft Gender Equality bill were

inconsistent with constitution and needed to be removed or amended. President's statement widely condemned with Bar Association of Sri Lanka 19 June criticising speech as "threat to Supreme Court and entire judicial system" and rejecting president's proposed parliamentary select committee to review Supreme Court ruling as "dangerous precedent". Senior Tamil National Alliance member M.A. Sumanthiran 18 June alleged president's statement was part of larger plan to intimidate Supreme Court into approving constitutional amendment to extend president's term from five to six years.

Sinhala-dominated parties appealed for support of Tamil voters in north and east. During visit to northern towns, Samagi Jana Balawegaya leader and likely presidential candidate Sajith Premadasa 9 June promised he would implement thirteenth amendment, designed to grant enough powers to provinces to satisfy demands for self-rule by Tamils in north and east. National People's Power (NPP) and Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) leader Anura Kumara Disanayake 11 June also visited north, said JVP party also supported "properly implementing" provincial council system, falling short of clear promise to fully implement thirteenth amendment.

South East Asia

➡ **Myanmar Arakan Army (AA) expanded control in west, fuelling displacement, while ethnic armed groups and regime continued hostilities in north and south west.**

In west, AA continued to make battlefield progress. AA rebels 6 June escalated attacks against last regime positions in northern Rakhine state, claiming capture of key military base in Maungdaw township; AA 16 June ordered residents to leave Maungdaw town after it claimed seizure of nearly all military posts in township. Local media 23 June reported that AA had seized key regime base in Ann township vital for defence of its Western Regional Command headquarters. Further south, local sources 24 June reported AA captured Thandwe Airport and Ngapali beach resort along with 132 regime soldiers, 47 policemen and their families. Meanwhile, regime forces 11 June ordered residents to leave as they attempted to secure outskirts of Rakhine capital, Sittwe; UN Human Rights chief 18 June called military response "indiscriminate", said displaced Rohingya communities had "nowhere to flee". UN Food Program 25 June denounced burning and looting of its food warehouses in Rakhine.

In north, Kachin Independence Army (KIA) clashed with regime. KIA and regime forces 4 June renewed fighting near Momeik town in northern Shan state forcing 300 people to flee; KIA continued its push through eastern parts of Kachin State, seizing Sadon town on 11 June. While southern Kachin State increasingly comes under KIA control, it is facing more pushback across border in northern Shan State from other ethnic armed groups.

In south east, Karen forces braced for tough fight. Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) prepared to defend Thingan Nyi Naung village from regime convoy attempting to cross Dawna Mountain range. KNLA has signalled its determination to keep control of strategic village despite its loss of nearby border trade town of

Myawaddy. Meanwhile, regime-aligned Kayin National Army (formerly, Kayin State Border Guard Force) is in firm control of Myawaddy.

In other important developments. Regime forces 17 June arrested 13 members of Yangon-based underground group for allegedly planning to attack regime leader, Min Aung Hlaing, during 8 June ceremony for new bridge. Around 1,400 retired personnel under Reserve Forces Law, 1 June began reporting for duty.

➡ **Philippines Security operations continued in south, as authorities continued to fight communist rebels.**

Insecurity persisted in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Authorities 5 June arrested senior commander of Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in Datu Piang town for his alleged involvement in burning police car and shooting inside church in Maguindanao del Sur in 2020; suspect is accused of violating Anti-Terrorism Act and faces multiple charges including attempted murder, arson, and frustrated murder. Explosion 18 June occurred at fuel station hours after local govt declared Lamitan in Basilan province free from presence of Abu Sayyaf Group, leaving one person injured; police next day dismissed speculation of group's involvement citing extortion as motive for attack; Basilan authorities 19 June condemned attack, saying it undermined efforts of provincial and local governments to maintain peace and order in province. Members of 118 Base Command of Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) 19 June clashed with MILF's 105th base command in Datu Unsay municipality of Maguindanao del Sur, killing one civilian.

Clashes between security forces and communist rebels continued, notably in Mindanao and the Visayas. Amid ongoing counter-insurgency operations, military continued to exert pressure on various New People's Army (NPA) fronts, targeting leaders of guerrilla units and their legal fronts, as many fighters surrendered over last weeks. Military 10 June announced death of one communist rebel after 9 June clash with New People's Army (NPA) in Sultan Kudarat province, Mindanao. NPA rebels 23 June briefly clashed with security forces in north Samar, in Eastern Visayas region, killing one rebel. Hostilities, that saw rise in Luzon island, killed total of 17 and injured four during month.

↓ **South China Sea Violent maritime confrontation strained ties between Manila and Beijing, while Philippines and partners conducted military exercises.**

Violent confrontation heightened tensions between China and Philippines. Chinese Coast Guard boats 17 June shoved into Philippine navy vessels attempting to resupply the Philippine ship, BRP Sierra Madre, with food supplies; Chinese coastguards reportedly seized firearms, food airdropped and cell phones, damaged four Philippine navy boats, and forcibly towed one boat during encounter. Philippines foreign ministry 19 June said eight Philippine navy personnel injured during incident including one who lost finger from Chinese boat striking into Philippine boat. Manila 19 June released video of incident showing China Coast Guard sailors brandishing axes and knives while blocking the Philippine vessel attempting to reach Sierra Madre. Incident happened after China 15 June enacted new regulation permitting its coast guards to intercept and detain for up to 60 days

foreign boats and crews suspected of “trespassing” in waters it claims. For its part, China’s foreign ministry 19 June said Philippine vessels “deliberately rammed” Chinese vessels, calling incident “professional and restrained”. Philippine executive secretary 21 June said incident on 17 June did not constitute an “armed attack” and therefore does not trigger the mutual defence treaty with U.S.; Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr 27 June reiterated that 17 June incident was not an armed attack. Earlier, Philippines navy 7 June accused China of blocking medical evacuation of marine near Second Thomas Shoal calling it “barbaric and inhumane”.

U.S. & Philippines conducted military drills with regional partners. U.S. Navy’s Theodore Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Groups 11 June initiated military exercise Valiant Shield 2024, alongside Japanese (see China/Japan), French and Canadian forces. Naval forces from U.S., Canada, Japan, and Philippines 16-17 June conducted “maritime cooperative activity” in Philippines’ Exclusive Economic Zone.

Vietnam expanded its features on Spratly islands. Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative 7 June reported Vietnam accelerated land reclamation in Spratly islands, expanding its features in past six months as much as it had in previous two years; Philippine navy official 10 June said navy was monitoring situation, noting “Vietnam does not initiate illegal, coercive, aggressive, and deceptive actions against us unlike China”.

► **Thailand Criminal Court indicated former PM Thaksin on lèse-majesté charges, ethics case against PM Srettha continued, and deadly violence persisted in deep South.**

Court indicted former PM Thaksin, Move Forward Party (MFP) continued to face threat of dissolution. Criminal Court 18 June indicted former Thai PM Thaksin Shinawatra for defaming Thai monarchy during 2015 interview with Korean newspaper; Court same day released him on 500,000 baths (or \$13,600) bail and ordered him to reappear in court on 19 Aug. Amid court case about potential ban of election-winning MFP on lèse-majesté charges, former MFP leader Pita Limjaroenrat 9 June held press conference outlining party’s legal defence; Constitutional Court 18 June ordered MFP to submit deposition transcripts to court within seven days, set 3 July as date for next hearing.

Proceedings against PM Srettha Thavisin continued, senatorial elections began. Following Constitutional Court’s decision in late May to hear petition filed by 40 senators to remove PM Srettha from office on ethical grounds, court 18 June ordered individuals and agencies involved in case to submit more evidence within 15-day period, set 10 July as next hearing date. Process to select 200 senators from 20 professional and social groups began 9 June, with three rounds of intergroup polling by senate candidates at local, provincial and national levels; national-level poll concluded 26 June amid allegations of fraud, with results due on 2 July.

Violence continued in deep south. Rangers 9 June apprehended two suspected militants and 13 June discovered IED on National Highway roadside in Bannang Sata district, Yala province. In Pattani’s Nong Chik district, unknown attackers 13 June killed employee of Khor Thanyong Subdistrict Administrative Organisation as he rode his motorcycle to work. In Yala’s Bannang Sata district, suspected militants

14 June shot dead two Buddhist villagers. Gunmen 25 June killed human rights activist Roning Dolah in Yarang district, Pattani. An IED attack 27 June wounded ranger non-commissioned officer in Sri Sakhon district, Narathiwat. Militants 30 June detonated car bomb in front of police housing block in Bannang Sata district, Yala, killing one civilian and wounding 21 other people.

In another important international development. Govt 20 June submitted formal request to join BRICS, hoping to become member of group at next summit in Russia in October 2024.

Pacific

➡ **New Caledonia (France) President Macron suspended electoral reform that triggered deadly unrest in May, but tensions remained high as authorities began transferring detained independence leaders to metropolitan France.**

Unrest sparked by France's proposed voting reforms early June subsided somewhat, although pro-independence militant 7 June died from injuries sustained 3 June during clashes with security forces near capital Nouméa, bringing death toll since riots started in May to nine. Road barricades also persisted in Nouméa with pro-independence militants vowing to remain mobilised until reforms are dropped. President Macron 12 June announced suspension of electoral reform bill in light of snap parliamentary polls in France, also citing need to "give full strength to dialogue on the ground and the return to order". Authorities reopened international airport 17 June after month-long closure, but extended curfew, bans on carrying weapons, and military support to police. Security forces 19 June took into custody 11 people on allegations of instigating unrest and participating in violence, including pro-independence leader and protest movement coordinator Christian Tein; Nouméa court 22 June announced transfer of Tein and six other pro-independence militants to metropolitan France for pre-trial detention, leading to renewed unrest and violence, including outside Nouméa. Authorities reported unrest 23-24 June throughout New Caledonia's mainland and on Pines and Mare islands, including "attacks on the police, arson and roadblocks"; security forces arrested at least 38 people. Authorities 28 June extended curfew until 8 July, and prohibited gatherings over 29-30 June election weekend as latest bout of violence fuelled fears of unrest spreading further.