



Presents

International Affairs July 2019

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Abu Dhabi to host first ISA's joint security exercise ISALEX19

- Representatives of 50 law enforcement agencies of the International Security Alliance are taking part in the first joint security exercise in Abu Dhabi. The International Security Alliance, launched in 2017 in Abu Dhabi, are an international working group to confront organised, transnational and extremist crimes.

New Zealand bans single-use plastic shopping bags

- New Zealand has officially banned single-use plastic shopping bags. Companies that break the ban will face heavy penalties, including fines of up to 100,000 New Zealand dollars (USD 67,000). Under the new rules, thin plastic single-use shopping bags can no longer be supplied, but reusable carriers are allowed. The legislation which was announced in August last year came into force.

Bangladesh, China sign 9 instruments on various sectors

- China will provide 2,500 metric tons of rice to Bangladesh for the forcibly displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar. This was part of nine instruments signed between Bangladesh and China today. The nine instruments- five agreements, three memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and a document- were inked after the bilateral talks between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang at the Great Hall of People today

French to levy 3% tax on Internet giants

- France's Lower House of Parliament approved a small, pioneering tax on Internet giants like Google, Amazon and Facebook. The Bill aims to stop multinationals from avoiding taxes by setting up headquarters in low-tax European Union countries. Currently, the companies pay nearly no tax in countries where they have large sales like France.
- The bill foresees a 3% tax on the French revenues of digital companies with global revenue of more than €750 million, and French revenue over €25 million.

Iran exceeds uranium limit set in nuclear deal

- Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that the country has exceeded the 300-kilogramme limit on its enriched uranium reserves set by the 2015 nuclear deal.
- This was confirmed by the International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors. It is only permitted (until 2031) to produce low-enriched uranium, which has a 3-4 per cent concentration of U-235, and can fuel a power plant.

India pledges to contribute USD 5 million in 2019 to UN Palestine refugee agency

- India has pledged to contribute 5 million US Dollars in 2019 to the UN Palestine refugee agency. It also voiced concern over the agency's financial situation and called for ensuring sustained financial support for its work.
- India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador K Nagaraj Naidu said the Government has increased its annual financial contribution fourfold to the UNRWA core budget, from 1.25 million dollars in 2016 to 5 million in 2018.

IMF board approves \$6 billion loan package for Pakistan

- The International Monetary Fund Executive board gave formal approval to a three-year, \$6 billion loan package for Pakistan to rein in mounting debts and stave off a looming balance of payments crisis. The Board approval will allow immediate disbursement of around \$1 billion, with the remainder to be phased in over the period of the programme, subject to quarterly review, the IMF said in a brief statement.

India hands over pre-fabricated houses to Myanmar for displaced returnees

- India handed over 250 pre-fabricated houses to Myanmar in Maung Daw for use of displaced returnees. External Affairs Ministry said in a release that India had taken up the project under its Rakhine State Development Programme under which 25 million dollars are allocated for a period of five years.

Saudi Arabia adopts Digital India, equality of women in this year's Haj

- Indian Haj mission in Saudi Arabia has adopted digital technology to reach out to a large number of pilgrims as part of the Government of India's initiative of Digital India.
- The App - Indian Haj Information System- developed by the consulate is to receive feedback, a grievance from Hajjis, With the introduction of Haj App, Indian diplomats in Saudi Arabia are trying to form a bridge with the pilgrims not only to facilitate a smooth and hassle-free Haj operation but also to receive grievances and feedbacks to improve the service.

US State Dept approves potential 2.2 billion arms sale to Taiwan

- The US State Department has approved the potential sale of 2.2 billion US dollars worth of arms to Taiwan. The Pentagon said the arms included Abrams tanks and Stinger missiles. Meanwhile, China urged Washington to immediately cancel the potential weapons sale.

Newly appointed Force Commander of UN mission in South Sudan encourages peacekeepers

- Newly appointed Force Commander of the UN mission in South Sudan, Lieutenant General Shailesh Sadashiv Tinaikar assumed charge in Juba recently. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had announced the appointment of Tinaikar in May. After assuming the charge, the Force Commander encouraged peacekeepers to achieve their mandate and overcome difficulties with patience and perseverance.

France to impose green tax on plane tickets from 2020

- The French government is to impose a tax of up to €18 on plane tickets for all flights from airports in France to fund less-polluting transportation projects. The new measure is expected to bring in some €182 million a year which will be invested in greener transport infrastructures, notably rail. Transport Minister Elisabeth Borne said that it will only be applied on outgoing flights and not those flying into the country.

India and Italy set up Fast –Track Mechanism to Facilitate investors and Companies

- In order to facilitate Italian companies and investors in India and Indian companies and investors in Italy, it has been decided to establish fast-track system for companies and investors of both the countries. The key objectives of the fast – track system in India will be to pave the way for and identify and solve problems faced by Italian companies and investors with their operations in India.

Christine Lagarde resigns as managing director of IMF

- International Monetary Fund, IMF managing director Christine Lagarde has resigned ahead of a decision on her nomination to become head of the European Central Bank, ECB. If the European Council approves Ms Lagarde's ECB nomination, she will become the central bank's first-ever female leader, responsible for the Euro and the monetary policy of the eurozone.

Boris Johnson to take over as Prime Minister of Britain

- The new leader of Conservative party Boris Johnson will take over as Prime Minister of Britain. Mr Johnson is scheduled to meet the Queen at Buckingham Palace where he will be invited to form a new government. Mr Johnson will inherit a wafer-thin parliamentary majority and like his predecessor Theresa May, he will continue to rely on the support of the Democratic Unionists of Northern Ireland to govern.

French submarine that vanished in 1968 found in Mediterranean

- The French navy announced that it had located the wreck of a submarine that disappeared in 1968, voicing hope that the 50-year mystery of how it vanished may finally be solved. Minerve, as the submarine was called, was last heard from off the southern coast of France with 52 sailors on board on January 17, 1968.

New India-UK scheme to fund students from UK to visit India:

- A new India-UK bilateral pilot scheme has been launched to support Britain's universities to collaborate with Indian partners to send UK students to India during their studies. It aims to generate up to 200 opportunities for undergraduate students at UK universities to visit India by March 2021.

Motihari-Amlekhgunj oil pipeline further strengthens India-Nepal relations

- The landmark Motihari-Amlekhgunj oil pipeline has been completed by Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC). This is the first transnational petroleum pipeline from India and first South Asian oil pipeline corridor. It is also the first oil pipeline in Nepal

3 Indian-origin persons in Boris Johnson's cabinet

- Rishi Sunak, Priti Patel and Alok Sharma are among the three Indian-origin ministers soon to be inducted into the UK government by new British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Priti Patel as Home Secretary, Rishi Sunak as Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Alok Sharma as International Development Secretary

WHO says Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal & Thailand achieve Hepatitis B control

- Bangladesh along with Bhutan, Nepal and Thailand in South-East Asia Region has been able to achieve Hepatitis B control. The prevalence of the deadly disease has come down to less than one per cent among five-year-old children says the WHO in its report published.

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