

TWTW # 967, 04 June 2023

## North Korea's space ambitions, Turkey elections, and the US debt ceiling

Femy Francis, Nithyashree RB , Ankit Singh



A still of North Korea's Chollima- 1 rocket launch from KCNA media (Image Source: Reuters)

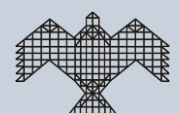
### North Korea: Nuclear, Missile and now Space

Femy Francis

#### What happened?

On 31 May, North Korea's first military reconnaissance satellite rocket Chollima- 1 witnessed a short ride, owing to the malfunctioning of the engine and fuel system. The debris of the satellite fell into the yellow sea after it flew for mere 10 minutes. North Korean official media outlet KCNA said:” The new satellite vehicle rocket, Chollima-1, crashed into the West Sea as it lost propulsion due to an abnormal startup of the engine on the 2nd stage after the 1st stage was separated during normal flight.” This was North Korea's sixth attempt at launching a satellite, and the first espionage satellite mission into the orbit.

The failed launch led to a panic in South Korea and Japan where they issued an emergency, which was swiftly overhauled as the government's apologized for causing confusion and panic. The launch garnered a wave of criticism where Japanese PM Fumio Kishida said:



“Any missile launches by North Korea, even if called a satellite, is a significant issue that affects the safety of Japanese citizens.” UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres “strongly condemning that launch on 30 May — called on Pyongyang to refrain from conducting further satellite launches using such technology and swiftly resume dialogue to achieve the goal of sustainable peace as well as the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula,” issued UN’s official briefing. White House issued a statement: “The door has not closed on diplomacy, but Pyongyang must immediately cease its provocative actions and instead choose engagement.”

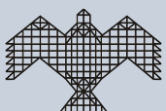
North Korea’s supreme leader Kim Jong Un’s sister Kim Yo Jong stated that Pyongyang would soon be successful in placing their military satellite into orbit. She further expressed that the international criticism of their test was “contradictory in nature”, she believes: “The US is a group of gangsters who would claim that even if the DPRK launches a satellite... it is illegal and threatening.” The debris collect by the South Korean government found proof that ICBM technology was used to aid the launch and therefore violating the UNSC sanctions.

### What is the background?

First, North Korea’s march towards the Space Programme. North Korea’s space programme started by the launch of Kwangmyongsong-1 satellite in 1998 and only by 2012, its Kwangmyongsong-3 was successful in stationing an object in the orbit but did not have a functioning transmission system. In 2016, North Korea claims to have sent a satellite while the US accused the country disguising the test for ICBM launch engine. In 2017 North Korea’s Hwasong-14 ICBM test launch claims that it could reach US land and by 2023 Hwasong-17 ICBM included technology for Space launch. Ri Pyong Chol, North Korea’s military official stated that in light of US and South Korea’s joint military drills they need: “means capable of gathering information about the military acts of the enemy in real time.” This led to them launching Chollima- 1 rocket, their first reconnaissance satellite launch. North Korea has been ramping up its space ambition to fill gap between South Korea’s outer space capabilities. South Korea though relatively young to the space race it has been growing in exponential speed owing to support by US. Recently, it launched Nuri its first fully homegrown vehicle. UAE also announced ‘Emirates Mission to the Asteroid Belt’ to further aid space exploration, this comes in after two Saudi astronauts travelled in the International Space Station.

Second, the launch violates sanctions against North Korea. The United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions on North Korea to push back against the nuclear missile activities since 2016. The US, South Korea and Japan have condemned the launch by stating that it violates the international sanctions prohibiting the usage of Inter-Continental Ballistic missile technology by North Korea. UNSC strictly prohibits any long- range missile test by Pyongyang. US National Security Council spokesperson Adam Hodge expressed his concerns over the launch and stated that it has raised tensions in the region, destabilizing the security. Furthermore, since the failed launch South Korea sanctioned North Korea based hacking group Kimsuky for being indirectly or directly being involved in stealing data on weapons and satellite development.

Third, North Korea condemns increased involvement of the US in the Korean peninsula. North Korea blames its actions as vital to deter the US and South Korea front. Recently the two countries have been engaging in joint military exercises and established the “Washington Declaration” which clearly outlines North Korea as a mutual threat. As US plans to support South Korea by deploying nuclear armed submarines in the region, North Korea observes the increased engagement in the region as threatening where Kim Yo Jong said: “The more the



enemies are dead set on staging nuclear war exercises, and the more nuclear assets they deploy in the vicinity of the Korean peninsula, the stronger the exercise of our right to self-defence will become in direct proportion to them.” Additionally, South Korea recently launched their first commercial grade satellite “Nuri” due to which Pyongyang feels an urgency to develop its space capacity.

Fourth, North Korea a regional threat. The country’s persistent rise in developing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles have established concerns in the region. North Korea informed Japan of their plans to launch the satellite to which the Japanese Defense Ministry stated: “We will take destructive measures against ballistic and other missiles that are confirmed to land in our territory.” They expressed that any disguised “satellite” launch is a threat to national security and in light of the threat they ordered the preparation for destructive measures. South Korea alarmed their concerns as Pyongyang was able to develop solid- fuel ICBM which would assist in launching long- range nuclear strikes with ease. The aggressive rise of North Korea’s defense and offence capacity presents a looming threat in not only the Korean peninsula but to the US, owing to Hwasong-17 that has a maximum range of 15,000 kilometres, Pyongyang has the capacity to attack US homeland.

#### What does it mean?

The question arises as to why North Korea’s space ambition is threatening. Soon after the failure to launch they issued their conviction to re-launch and put the spy satellite on the orbit. Pyongyang observes the development of reconnaissance satellites is vital to deter US backed alliance of South Korea and Japan. They express that the US giant has established contradictory stance as they believe that they too face a looming threat in the region. North Korea never ratified to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and therefore is not obliged to the same rules of disarmament.

Therefore, the unilateral sanctions were imposed, but for North Korea, a usual defector of international law, it does not feel the need to comply with international law/ sanctions. The threat from North Korea’s satellite and space ambitions are omnipresent as the larger ambition of reconnaissance technology is to aid the military and nuclear capability of the country. While the region and international community can deem the launch as a threat, North Korea will aim to develop its capacity to deter aggression. North Korean espionage satellites would lead to breach of sensitive information and that sooner or later, the Korean peninsula and its allies will face a larger threat not limited to nuclear and missile.

---

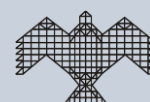
## Turkey's Election: Erdogan's reign to continue

Nithyashree RB

#### What happened?

On 28 May, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan won the second round of elections securing 52.16 per cent. The opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu secured 47.84 per cent. Erdogan will be ruling Turkey for the third decade. Following his victory, Erdogan said: “I thank our nation, which gave us the responsibility of governing again for the next five years.”

On 28 May, Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated Erdogan over a call. He said: “The election victory was a natural result of your selfless work as the head of the Republic of Turkey, clear evidence of the support of the Turkish people for your efforts to strengthen state sovereignty and conduct an independent foreign policy.”



On 28 May, US President Joe Biden tweeted, “I look forward to continuing to work together as NATO Allies on bilateral issues and shared global challenges.”

On 28 May, EU Council President Charles Michel tweeted, “France and Turkey have huge challenges to face together. Return of peace to Europe, future of our Euro-Atlantic Alliance, Mediterranean Sea. With President Erdogan, whom I congratulate on his re-election, we will continue to move forward.”

### What is the background?

First, elections were free but unfair. The incumbency provided Erdogan control over 90 per cent of the media. According to BBC News, Erdogan was featured in Media for 32 hours and 42 minutes while the opposition party, Republican People’s Party (CHP) leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu got only 32 minutes in April. Erdogan accused Kilicdaroglu of colluding with the terrorist Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). At the height of the campaigning, Muharrem Ince withdrew from the elections as a purported sex tape emerged in the media. He accused AKP of tarnishing his reputation by releasing a deepfake video. Throughout the campaigning AKP and the media undermined the opposition which turned out to be advantageous for Erdogan.

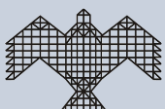
Second, background to the second round of elections. On 11 May, Homeland Party’s presidential candidate Muharrem Ince withdrew from the elections. On 14 May, the first round of presidential elections in Turkey concluded. Erdogan secured 49.5 per cent and Kilicdaroglu secured 44.9 per cent. On the same day in the parliamentary elections, the Erdogan-led Justice and Development Party (AKP) party won 267 seats out of 600 in the parliament. The Kilicdaroglu-led opposition party, Republican People’s Party (CHP) won 169 seats in the first round of elections. As no party secured more than 50 per cent, on 16 May the supreme election council announced that the top two contenders will go for a second round of election. On 22 May, the third-place contender in Turkey’s first round of presidential elections, Sinan Ogan, an independent candidate endorsed Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. On 24 May, Victory Party leader Umit Ozdag endorsed the opposition, Republican People’s Party leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu.

Third, Erdogan’s unexpected win. The pro-democracy Kilicdaroglu was expected to win especially by the West as Erdogan’s two-decade leadership was undemocratic. Because for Erdogan, the constitutional referendum of 2017 gave him unilateral decision-making powers as his party has always been the majority in the parliament except for a brief period in 2015. Freedom of the Press and speech is decreasing while the detainment of journalists is prevalent. Despite the economic crisis and tragic losses of lives and infrastructure during the earthquakes, voters preferred Erdogan in both rounds of elections. With the unexpected endorsement from Ogan, support for Erdogan increased. \

### What does it mean?

Under Erdogan, Turkey has forged a path for itself. Turkey’s role as a regional and international player is growing. For the region, Erdogan’s stance against the Kurds, being a hotspot for refugees, his interest in leading the Muslim coalition and reconciliations with countries in the neighbourhood will continue to surge.

Turkey, which was once seen as a sick man of Europe, now holds the key to the Euro-Atlantic integration. For the West, Erdogan’s win is likely to stall Sweden’s accession to NATO. Ankara’s role as a mediator in the Black Sea Grain deal and good relations with both Russia and Ukraine qualifies it as a possible mediator in the Ukrainian War itself. Although





Erdogan's win was not preferred by the West, through his assertive foreign policies he proved himself as an ally of both the West and the East.

For Turkey, Erdogan's short-sighted economic reforms have led to the fall of Lira. Unless there is a change in economic policies, with the devastation of the earthquake, the economic crisis is likely to exacerbate. The elections have indicated three things. First, the growing need for democracy and democratic institutions among people. Second, despite Erdogan's authoritative leadership, and decreasing vote share compared to the 2018 election, he won. Third, the major influence of incumbency in Erdogan's win.

---

## The US: Debt Ceiling Notches up higher

Ankit Singh

### What happened?

On 1 June, the US Senate approved Fiscal Responsibility Act by a 314/117 margin, allowing the US treasury department to issue T-bills, bonds and notes. There was no new limit set, rather the debt ceiling has been suspended till 2025. President Biden said: "The agreement represents a compromise, which means not everyone gets what they want. That's the responsibility of governing." House of representative speaker McCarthy said: "It has historic reductions in spending, consequential reforms will lift people out of poverty into the workforce, rein in government overreach – there are no new taxes, no new government programs."

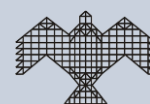
An assessment by Congressional Budget Office projected that the budget deficit would be reduced by roughly USD 1.5 trillion from 2023-2033, and reductions in discretionary outlays would amount to USD 1.3 trillion from 2024-2033.

### What is the background?

First, the debt ceiling has become increasingly political. The current political standoff was over reinvigorating American greatness but with divided visions. The Republicans wanted to induce severe budget cuts, easier licensing provisions for energy projects, stricter work conditions for food stamps and decreased domestic spending while Democrats wanted to increase taxes which they could not. The priorities are not long term and each side has planked their re-election agendas for seeking electoral support. With the information revolution at its peak, the agenda is more tainted with publicly stated political positions.

Second, the inflation reduction act. The IRA Act passed last year introduced policies to contain inflationary trends through localising supply chains and providing subsidies for setting up manufacturing industries in the US. This entailed commitment from the federal government to give subsidies in implementing such policies which would create additional fiscal burden. The largest impact has been felt in the semiconductor industry, even chip manufacturers from Europe are attracted to the subsidy regime introduced by the USA.

Third, raising the debt ceiling is not new for the US. According to TIME magazine, the US has added up to USD 25 trillion in debt in the last two decades and every time the expenses have outmatched the revenues. The debt ceiling has been raised 78 times since 1917 and stood at USD 31.4 trillion which was breached in January 2023. Currently, the debt-to-GDP ratio of the US stands at approximately 120 per cent of the GDP.



### What does it mean?

The US treasury securities are held in maximum number by Japan, followed by China and UK. Total treasury securities stands bought by other countries stands at USD 7.655 trillion and there is likely to be less buying from now onwards as the US looks within to funds to excessive debt. Reduced economic engagement in buying T-bills by developing countries will stagnate their progressive welfare policies.

The debt regime will transition from lenient to stricter conditions across the world as the US shies away from its role due to internal and external political conditions. At the writing of this note, the NY Taxpayer and International Debt Crises Protection Act is making its way to the assembly in New York. The bill would constrain the New York State to invest in foreign entities and would entail corporate wisdom on restructuring loans and sharing losses. Inward-looking US federal government will likely dilute its financial clout in the global economy as China should emerge as another balancer. This might as well be the reason why the US will shy away from defaulting on its debt this once.

### **Also in the news...**

Regional Round-ups

#### East and Southeast Asia This Week

##### **Japan: Law allowing extended operation of nuclear reactors passed**

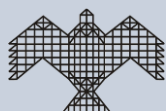
On 31 May, The Strait Times reported that in an effort to address energy challenges and meet climate targets, Japan passed a law allowing nuclear reactors to operate beyond 60 years. The legislation aims to establish a carbon-free electricity supply system, with exceptions granted for unforeseeable circumstances. The government seeks to ensure stable electricity supply and strengthen safety checks at aging reactors following the 2011 Fukushima disaster.

##### **Taiwan: Ukraine's defence against Russia vital in deterring China's invasion**

On 31 May, The Strait Times reported that Taiwan's representative to the US, Ms Hsiao Bi-khim, emphasized the importance of Ukraine's successful defence against Russian aggression in deterring China from invading Taiwan. She stated that pushing back against aggression sends a strong message that invasions will not go unpunished. Some Republican lawmakers have argued for decreasing weapons aid to Ukraine in favor of strengthening Taiwan's defence capabilities. Ms Hsiao clarified that Taiwan's weapons orders are separate and not affected by other governments. She stressed that China closely observes Russia's invasion and hopes that Beijing understands that aggression will face international pushback. The US aims to bolster Taiwan's military deterrence while maintaining the status quo and avoiding independence declarations.

##### **China: Sends astronauts to Tiangong space station**

On 30 May, the Strait Times reported that China successfully launched three astronauts, including a civilian scientist, to its Tiangong space station, marking a milestone in its ambitious space program. The mission aims to bolster China's efforts to catch up with the US and Russia in space exploration. The crew will conduct experiments and collaborate with their predecessors, who have been stationed on the space station for six months. China also plans to establish a lunar base and land a manned mission on the Moon by 2030. The Tiangong space station, equipped with advanced scientific equipment, is set to remain operational for at least a decade.



### **South Korea: Record arms deal with Poland sets stage for European military expansion**

On 29 May, The Strait Times reported that South Korea's historic USD 13.7 billion arms agreement with Poland had laid the foundation for a formidable military-industrial alliance aimed at meeting Europe's growing demand for weaponry. With rising tensions in hotspots like North Korea and the South China Sea, South Korea's defence exports surged to over USD 17 billion in 2022. The deal with Poland, a prominent NATO member, included advanced rocket launchers, tanks, self-propelled howitzers, and fighter aircraft. This landmark partnership enables South Korea to provide high-quality weapons quickly, while Poland offers manufacturing capabilities and a sales network into Europe. The agreement also establishes consortia between South Korean and Polish companies, facilitating joint production and future supply to other European countries.

### **Singapore: China establishes hotline to strengthen defense communication and cooperation**

On 01 June, The Strait Times reported that Singapore and China's defence officials have signed an agreement to establish a hotline to enhance communication between defence leaders. The agreement was witnessed by Singaporean Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen and his Chinese counterpart Li Shangfu after co-chairing the second Singapore-China Defence Ministers' Dialogue. The hotline, referred to as a "secure defence telephone link," aims to strengthen mutual understanding and trust. Both ministers reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing defence cooperation and discussed global and regional security issues. They also explored ways to strengthen ASEAN-China defence cooperation. This initiative aligns with the 2019 Agreement on Defence Exchanges and Security Cooperation.

### **South Asia This Week**

#### **India: External Affairs Minister at BRICS foreign ministers meeting**

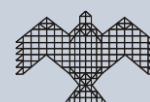
On 01 June, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar urged BRICS nations to demonstrate sincerity in reforming the UNSC while he delivered his opening remarks at the BRICS Foreign Ministers meeting in Capetown, South Africa. India has been at the forefront of pressing the long-pending reform of the Security Council. He also said that the most important problem countries face is the "economic concentration that left too many nations at the mercy of too few." He added that BRICS should give particular consideration and promote economic decentralization, essential for political democratization.

#### **India: President to visit Suriname and Serbia on her first state visit**

On 29 May, the Ministry of External Affairs said President Droupadi Murmu would visit Suriname and Serbia from 04-09 June. This will be her first state visit since assuming office in July 2022. The President will visit Paramaribo, Suriname from 04 to 06 June at the invitation of the Republic of Suriname's President Chandrikapersad Santokhi. Following this, she will visit Belgrade at the invitation of President Aleksander Vucic.

#### **Nepal: India to export 300,000 tons of wheat**

On 28 May, The Kathmandu Post reported that India cleared the export of 300,000 tons of wheat to Nepal and several other countries such as Indonesia, Senegal and Gambia. In April, amidst the pressure from the flour industry, struggling with insufficient domestic production, the Nepal government requested a consignment of 300,000 tons of wheat. According to the economic survey published by Nepal, its wheat production has dropped by 2.14 per cent this fiscal year. The government officials stated that the demand for wheat has been increasing significantly. The Indian government's ban on wheat exports last May, due to poor harvests,



has caused 80-85 per cent of Nepali flour mills to shut down. The embargo was lifted in December when India instituted a quota system for its neighbours.

### **Bangladesh: PM Hasina and President Erdogan exchange words of support**

On 31 May, in a telephone call to PM Sheikh Hasina, the newly elected President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, emphasised his stance on working with the former to take the relations between the two countries to a new height. Hasina congratulated Erdogan on his victory in the second round and further reiterated Bangladesh “would remain steadfast to stand by the brotherly people of Turkey at any time of need.” Erdogan, in reply, expressed his gratitude to the people of Bangladesh and wished to strengthen ties between the two peoples. Hasina delivered her best wishes to Erdogan and his family, wishing peace, progress, and prosperity to Turkey through him.

### **Sri Lanka: ADB approves USD 350 million in loans**

On 30 May, State Minister of Finance Shehan Semasinghe welcomed the Asian Development Bank’s approval of a USD 350 million loan to Sri Lanka for the stabilization of its economy. The loan, which was approved on 29 May, is a part of a broader package provided by the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) Extended Fund Facility (EFF). He said, “We greatly value the emergency assistance provided by the ADB to support basic services and sustain livelihoods during the crisis,” and further pointed out that the country would stay committed to both internal and external reform measures to better the debt situation.

### **Sri Lanka: India’s credit facility extended for one more year**

On 30 May, as per Sri Lanka’s request, the State Bank of India (SBI) extended the tenure of the Credit Facility to USD 1 billion till March 2024. The facility was provided in March 2022 for urgent procurement of fuel, medicines, food items, and industrial raw materials, as per the requirements and priorities of the Government of Sri Lanka. The amendment agreement which brings the extension into effect was signed in the presence of the State Minister of Finance, Shehan Semasinghe, senior officials from the Ministry of Finance of Sri Lanka, and officials from the High Commission of India, Colombo.

### **Sri Lanka: Prime Minister pitched for Thai investments**

On 31 May, Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena, who is in Thailand to attend the United Nations Vesak Day celebrations, addressed a forum of Thai businessmen, industrialists, and entrepreneurs. He insisted that they undertake investments in Sri Lanka. Further, he highlighted the investors' major perks, including tax rebates and access to many markets through Free Trade Agreements.

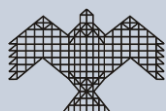
### **Pakistan: Visit by Belarus FM Raises Concerns in the West**

On 31 May, Belarus Foreign Minister Sergei Aleinik's visit to Pakistan caught the attention of Western countries, particularly the United States. Belarus, a key ally of Russia, is openly supporting Moscow in its conflict with Ukraine. The US, already concerned about Pakistan's growing closeness to Russia, sees this partnership as linked to the Russian and Chinese bloc. During the visit, both countries expressed their intent to enhance cooperation in various fields, including trade and industrial development. The invitation for FM Bilawal to visit Belarus was accepted.

### **Middle East and Africa This Week**

#### **South Sudan: UN extends sanctions for a year**

On 31 May, BBC reported that the UN Security Council voted to extend the arms embargo and sanctions imposed on South Sudan for a year. The council passed the sanctions on 30





May with 10 votes in favor and five members abstention. The countries that abstained were China, Russia, Ghana, Gabon, and Mozambique. All UN member states were directed to restrict the direct or indirect supply, sale, or transfer of armaments to South Sudan. The council expressed its concern over the continued intensification of violence prolonging the political, security, economic, and humanitarian crisis in most parts of the country. Representative of the Republic of South Sudan to the UN, Ambassador Akuei Bona Malwal stated that the sanctions were done in bad faith and, ill intention.

#### **Burundi: Nuclear energy deal with Russia**

On 31 May, BBC reported that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov visited Burundi's Foreign Minister Albert Shingiro in Bujumbura on 30 May. Lavrov stated that the preparation for the nuclear energy inter-governmental deal between Russia and Burundi was in its final stage. Previously, in November 2022, the two countries signed a nuclear energy roadmap deal in which Russia pledged to assist Burundi in the establishment of nuclear power stations. Additionally, Lavrov stated "The roadmap on nuclear energy has already been signed between Rosatom, a Russian state energy corporation, and its Burundian partners. Both parties committed to cooperate in the peaceful use of nuclear energy."

#### **CAR: Constitutional referendum to remove the president's term limit**

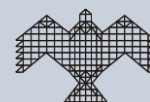
On 31 May, BBC reported that President Faustin-Archange Touadera announced 30 July as the date for the referendum on a new constitution that would allow him to seek a new term in 2025. Currently, a president can only serve two four-year terms. Touadera stated that the current constitution has provisions that compromise the country's development. The opposition parties criticized the constitutional referendum claiming it was a move to allow Touadera to run for a third term. The former prime minister and opposition leader, Nicholas Tiangaye, stated: "This new constitution will be written so that Touadera remains president for life."

#### **South Africa: New law in parliament ahead of Putin's visit**

On 30 May, BBC reported that South Africa has been seeking to pass a law in parliament so that it has the power to decide whether or not to arrest a leader wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC). The arrest warrant issued by the ICC requires Pretoria to arrest Russian President Vladimir Putin as he is expected to attend the BRICS summit in August in Cape Town. Deputy Minister Obed Bapela stated that South Africa had written about a waiver to the ICC citing Article 98 of the Roman Statute. Additionally, Bapela criticized ICC for its double standards. Previously, South Africa granted immunity to all the officials attending the summit.

#### **Russia: Foreign Minister visits Kenya**

On 29 May, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov paid a surprise visit to Kenya following Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba's visit. Lavrov told the Kenyan lawmakers: "During our visit, we will discuss our cooperation in the trade, investment and economic spheres, humanitarian and cultural questions, education, cooperation in the UN and many other issues," the Russian Foreign Ministry reported. In February 2023, 22 out of 54 member states of the African Union abstained from voting on a resolution that wanted Russia to withdraw from Ukraine. The consecutive visits indicate that Kuleba and Lavrov are garnering support from African countries.



### **Kosovo: Diplomatic pressure mounts; Germany and France call for new elections**

On 01 June, the US, France, and Germany increased diplomatic pressure on Pristina and Belgrade to resolve the dispute in northern Kosovo. Speaking at the European Political Community summit in Moldova, French President Emmanuel Macron said that he and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz urged the Kosovan and Serbian leaders to organize new elections quickly as possible. The US called Kosovo and Serbia to take “immediate steps” to defuse the situation and warned that the crisis is hindering their Euro-Atlantic integration. Meanwhile, Prime Minister, said that he will not back down from appointing ethnic Albanian mayors in the Serb majority areas of Northern Kosovo.

### **UAE: Withdrawal from a US-led coalition**

On 31 May, the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs withdrew from a US-led maritime coalition called Combined Maritime Forces. The UAE highlighted its commitment to dialogue and diplomatic engagement to develop regional security and maintain stability. The withdrawal is crucial in regional geopolitics as the region poses some of the most important shipping routes. However, UAE has been an active participant in the US-led coalition. The Wall Street Journal reported that the UAE’s decision was taken as the United States failed to address the Iranian threats.

### **UAE: New spacecraft to be launched in 2028 to study origins of life**

On 29 May, UAE presented the plans to launch a spacecraft in 2028 to explore the central asteroid belt of the solar system. The mission was undertaken to unveil the origins of life on Earth. The spaceship is named MBR, after the leader Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and he remarked: “The remarkable journey will be 10 times the distance covered by the Hope Probe.” The MBR will reach six asteroids and terminates at Justitia, the seventh asteroid, by 2034, and it will be enough to get more information about the origins of life. The mission is considered a start for extracting resources from asteroids or fulfilling a goal to build a colony on Mars by 2117.

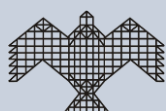
## Europe and the Americas This Week

### **Finland: First military exercise is being held at Finland’s Arctic with NATO**

On 27 May, the first military drill in Finland’s Arctic region conducted by NATO and Finnish troops called Arctic Challenge 2023 began in Rovajarvi. 1000 troops from the US, Britain, Norway and Sweden and 6500 troops from Finland are taking part in the drill with over 1000 vehicles. Major General Gregory Anderson from the US Army said: “We are here, we are committed. The U.S. Army is here training with our newest NATO ally to build that capability, to help defend Finland if anything happened.” The exercise ended on 02 June 2023.

### **Russia: Foreign Minister visits Kenya**

On 29 May, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov paid a surprise visit to Kenya following Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba’s visit. Lavrov told the Kenyan lawmakers: “During our visit, we will discuss our cooperation in the trade, investment and economic spheres, humanitarian and cultural questions, education, cooperation in the UN and many other issues,” the Russian Foreign Ministry reported. In February 2023, 22 out of 54 member states of the African Union abstained from voting on a resolution that wanted Russia to withdraw from Ukraine. The consecutive visits indicate that Kuleba and Lavrov are garnering support from African countries.



### **Latvia: Parliament elects Edgars Rinkevics as the new president**

On 31 May, the Parliament elected Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics as the new president. He has served as Latvia's top diplomat since 2011 and has been a long-term supporter of Ukraine against Russian aggression. Rinkevics ascended to the top position as his predecessor, Egils Levits, decided not to run for the second term. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy congratulates the new President and called him, a "true friend of Ukraine." Former President Levits said that Latvia will be in safe hands for the next four years, congratulating Rinkevics. It is not clear who would replace him as the Foreign Minister.

### **Kosovo: Diplomatic pressure mounts; Germany and France call for new elections**

On 01 June, the US, France, and Germany increased diplomatic pressure on Pristina and Belgrade to resolve the dispute in northern Kosovo. Speaking at the European Political Community summit in Moldova, French President Emmanuel Macron said that he and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz urged the Kosovan and Serbian leaders to organize new elections quickly as possible. The US called Kosovo and Serbia to take "immediate steps" to defuse the situation and warned that the crisis is hindering their Euro-Atlantic integration. Meanwhile, Prime Minister, said that he will not back down from appointing ethnic Albanian mayors in the Serb majority areas of Northern Kosovo.

### **England: USD 100 billion plan for climate and development finance**

On 26 May, a plan of USD 100 billion for climate and development finance has been sent to the world's government ahead of the Paris Summit in June. The plan depends on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other multilateral development banks (MDBs) to cut the excessive macro-risk allowances on developing countries with USD 100 billion per year of foreign exchange guarantees for financing in native currencies rather than the dollar or euro. The currency guarantee to investors removes their risks and reduces the rate of interest the governments have to pay. The Paris Summit, hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron on 22-23 June, will be attended by several international leaders as well as representatives from key global institutions such as the IMF and the United Nations.

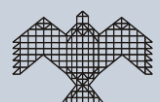
### **Brazil: President Lula tries to re-launch regional cooperation bloc**

On 30 May, leaders and representatives from 12 South American countries attended the South American summit in Brazil. Brazilian President Luiz Inacia Lula da Silva pushed for greater regional integration at the summit aiming to revive the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). At the summit, Lula focussed on creating a regional trade currency that can able to compete with the dominance of the US dollar and underlined the shifting political climate in South America, where leftist political parties have had a revival following years of predominantly conservative rule.

### **About the authors**

Harini Madhusudan, Rashmi Ramesh, Akriti Sharma and Ankit Singh are PhD scholars in the School of Conflict and Security Studies at the National Institute of Advanced Studies.

Padmashree Anandhan, Anu Maria Joseph, and Femy Francis are Research Associates at NIAS. Rishika Yadav, Jerry Franklin, Sreeja J S, Immaculine, R B Nithyashree, Lakshmi Parimala, Taffy Tonia, Subkish S and Melvin George are Research Interns at NIAS.

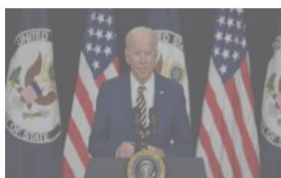


### About Global Politics:

The course provides an introduction to contemporary world affairs. The primary objective of the course is two – first, to enhance the understanding of contemporary global developments, with an attempt to comprehend the larger picture. Second, to identify trends leading forecasts on contemporary world affairs.

The Course will also invite senior scholars within and outside NIAS – also from within and outside India to provide lectures on contemporary world affairs.

### **The World This Week**



6 February 2021

**Biden's new US foreign policy priorities, Russia-EU tensions over Navalny, and China's redline on Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Taiwan**



30 January 2021

**The Daniel Pearl case in Pakistan and the new vaccine complications in Europe**



23 January 2021

**The US returns to the Paris Agreement, and India reengages the region through a Vaccine diplomacy**



16 January 2021

**North Korea's Party Congress, Houthis as terrorists, and Elections in Uganda**



9 January 2021

**Disorderly transition in the US, Breakthrough over Qatar, Enrichment in Iran and Arrests in Hong Kong**



27 December 2020

**The Year of COVID, Protests and Elections**



20 December 2020

**India-Bangladesh reset and China's Chang'e-5 success**



13 December 2020

**Morocco recognizes Israel, Maduro consolidates in Venezuela and No-deal Brexit gets real**

### **About TWTW**

The World This Week is an academic initiative of the Global Politics course at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore. The alert, published every Saturday aims to provide its readers with a ready reckoner of major developments during the week under three heads - what happened, what is the background and what does it mean. The Alert also provides an opportunity for the young scholars at NIAS and its partner institutions to follow and comment on contemporary global developments.

**Editor:** D. Suba Chandran

**Assistant Editor:** Ankit Singh and Femy Francis

