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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

# WEST ASIA DIGEST

*Monthly Compilation of News Items from West Asia*

- **Prime Minister Modi visits Cyprus**
- **Three All-Party delegations visit West Asia**
- **Türkiye to host UNRWA office**
- **Iran-Israel war**
- **Sanctions on Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich**
- **India launches Operation Sindhu**

### **Prime Minister Modi visits Cyprus**

On 15-16 June 2025, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi made an official visit to Cyprus—the first by an Indian Prime Minister in over 20 years—where he and Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides issued a Joint Declaration to implement a comprehensive partnership. The leaders reaffirmed shared values of democracy, rule of law, multilateral cooperation, and agreed to deepen ties across defence, counterterrorism, maritime security, innovation and regional connectivity. They announced the preparation of a five-year Action Plan (2025–2029) to guide bilateral cooperation, and agreed to finalise a Mobility Pilot Programme Arrangement by the end of 2025. They also expressed intent to conclude an MoU on innovation and technology and expand coordination in international forums, including support for India’s permanent seat at the UN Security Council. Cyprus reiterated support for India’s fight against terrorism and the IMEC corridor. President Christodoulides awarded Prime Minister Modi the “Grand Cross of the Order of Makarios III,” which Modi dedicated to the people of India and the enduring friendship between the two nations.

### **Three All-Party delegations visit West Asia**

Three high-level All-Party delegations travelled to various countries in the West Asian region from 25 May to 3 June 2025 as part of a coordinated diplomatic outreach following the Pahalgam terrorist attack. One delegation, led by Dr. Shrikant Eknath Shinde, visited the UAE from 25–26 May,

emphasising India’s measured and resolute response through Operation Sindoor, countering Pakistan-linked misinformation, and engaging with the Indian diaspora. Amb. Sujan R. Chinoy, Director General, MP-IDSA, was part of this delegation. A second delegation, led by Shri Baijayant Jay Panda, visited Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia between 25–29 May, holding talks with senior officials and media to highlight India’s zero-tolerance policy on terrorism. A third delegation, headed by Ms. Supriya Sule, visited Qatar from 24–26 May and Egypt from 2–3 June, meeting with senior leaders, media, and intellectuals. These delegations demonstrated India’s unified political stance against terrorism, reaffirmed its commitment to global counterterrorism cooperation, and countered disinformation campaigns aimed at India.

### **Türkiye to host UNRWA office**

Türkiye and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) signed a Host Country Agreement on 23 June 2025, to establish an UNRWA office in Ankara. The deal was concluded on the sidelines of the 51<sup>st</sup> OIC Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Istanbul, marking a key step in strengthening Türkiye’s political and financial support to the Agency. UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini praised Türkiye’s move, noting it would help broaden the Agency’s support base and operations, particularly amid ongoing humanitarian needs in Gaza. The agreement aims to deepen cooperation with Turkish institutions and enhance public engagement.

### **Iran-Israel war**

Israel Defence Forces (IDF) launched a preemptive attack on Iranian territory on 13 June with the stated objectives of destroying its nuclear sites, military and missile facilities. Israel's Operation Rising Lion between 13 and 24 June killed several top Iranian military figures, including the Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, Maj. Gen. Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC, Maj. General Hossein Salami. The Israeli attack also killed a number of prominent nuclear scientists of Iran. Israeli airstrikes have killed at least 935 people in Iran as on 30 June 2025.

Iran, under Operation True Promise 3, retaliated by launching more than 550 missiles and around 1000 drones towards Israel. In Israel, 28 people were killed, and around 3238 people were injured. On 22 June, the US joined Israel with attacks on nuclear facilities in Fordow, Natanz, and Esfahan. Iran, on 23 June, retaliated by launching missiles at the US' Al Udeid air base located in Qatar, causing minimal damage. On 24 June US President Donald Trump announced a ceasefire.

### **Sanctions on Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich**

On 10 June 2025, the Foreign Ministers of UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Norway imposed sanctions targeting Israel's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir for inciting violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, advancing serious abuses of Palestinian human rights and forced displacement rhetoric. These countries emphasised their commitment to

the two-state solution as a guarantee for security and dignity for Israelis and Palestinians that is imperilled by extremist settler violence and settlement expansion. The joint statement rejected the transfer of Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank and any reduction in the size of the strip. It clarified that the sanctions apply to the individuals in a personal capacity and are not directed at the Israeli government, maintaining support for the Jewish state's security. On 25 June, settlers attacked the West Bank town of Kafr Malik, burning vehicles and homes, leading to a confrontation with Palestinians. The IDF reportedly, to contain the situation, fired live rounds, killing three Palestinians and injuring seven others.

### **India launches Operation Sindhu**

Amid the Iran-Israel war, India launched Operation Sindhu on 18 June to evacuate Indian nationals from both warring states. The first evacuation flight on 18 June carried 110 students studying in Iran by transporting them to Armenia. Iran opened its airspace for India's evacuation operation, which was carried out from Tehran, Mashhad and Isfahan. Besides, students, professionals and tourists were stuck in Iran due to the rising tensions. From Israel, Indians were evacuated after moving them by land to Jordan and Egypt in four flights. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, 4415 Indians – 3597 from Iran and 818 from Israel, have been evacuated till 27 June 2025 using 19 flights. Moreover, 14 OCI cardholders, nine Nepali citizens, four Sri Lankan citizens and one Iranian spouse of an Indian national were evacuated from Iran.