

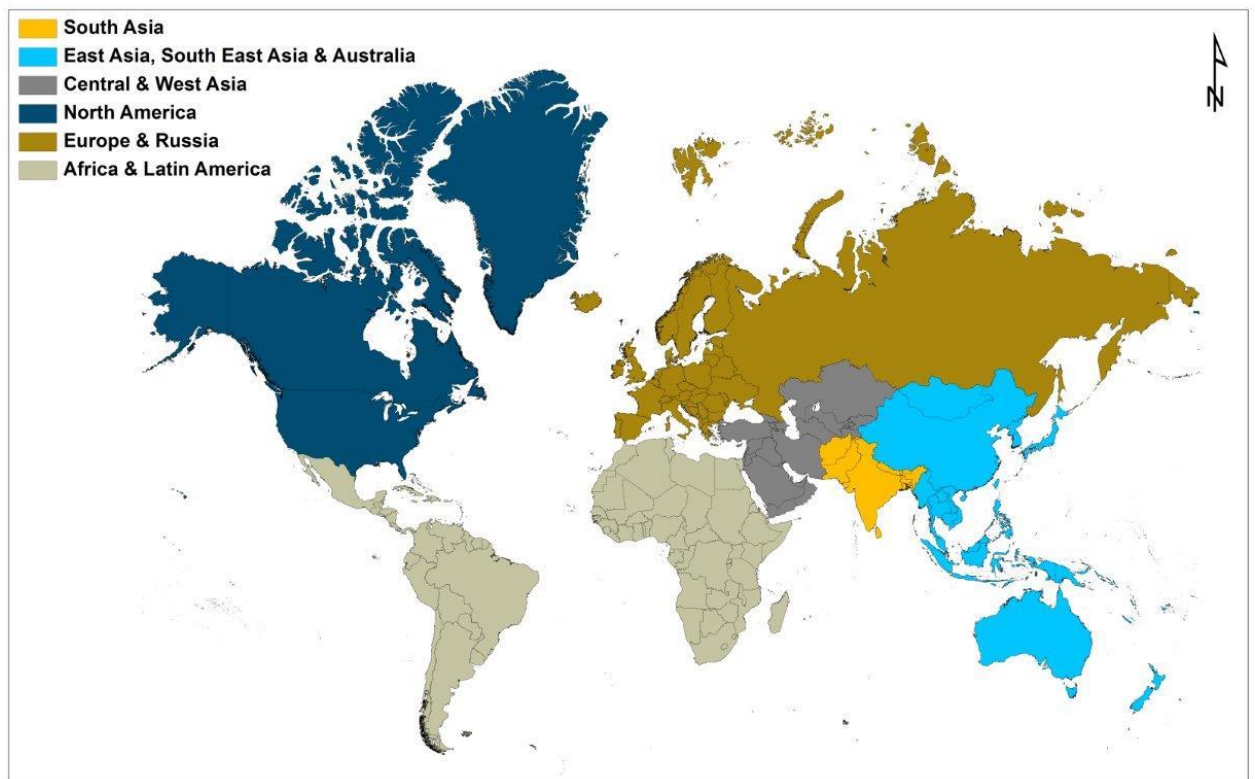


# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



Volume V, Issue 47 | November 27, 2021

Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003

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Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

## DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH Volume V, Issue 47

### ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group (DPG) is among India's oldest think tanks with its primary focus on strategic and international issues of critical national interest. DPG is a non-partisan institution and is independently funded by a non-profit Trust. Over past decades, DPG has established itself in both domestic and international circles and is widely recognised today among the top security think tanks of India and of Asia's major powers.

Since 2016, in keeping with India's increasing global profile, DPG has expanded its focus areas to include India's regional and global role and its policies in the Indo-Pacific. In a realist environment, DPG remains mindful of the need to align India's ambitions with matching strategies and capabilities, from diplomatic initiatives to security policy and military modernisation.

At a time of disruptive change in the global order, DPG aims to deliver research based, relevant, reliable and realist policy perspectives to an actively engaged public, both at home and abroad. DPG is deeply committed to the growth of India's national power and purpose, the security and prosperity of the people of India and India's contributions to the global public good. We remain firmly anchored within these foundational principles which have defined DPG since its inception.

### DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

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## South Asia

### India

#### [India's major soft-power tool in foreign policy](#)

November 26, 2021, The New Indian Express

Soft power of the cultural kind is for coffee-room discussions. Across the working table, real power along with financial and political support matter more. Where soft power counts in contemporary contexts, if at all, it owes to the moral stand a nation takes as long as it is consistent about it.

#### [Explained: What is INS Vela, the submarine commissioned by Indian Navy?](#)

November 25, 2021, The Indian Express

Vela is named after a decommissioned submarine Vela, which served the Navy from 1973 to 2010. The earlier Vela belonged to Foxtrot class submarine of Soviet origin.

#### [India, China, Russia call for an inclusive government in Afghanistan](#)

November 27, 2021, Hindustan Times

External affairs minister S Jaishankar, who chaired the meeting, said he had raised global expectations of Afghanistan as articulated in UN Security Council resolution 2593.

#### [Chinese naval forces may be ahead of India, but our ships hold key in Indian Ocean region](#)

November 19, 2021, Firstpost

The Indian Navy's warships, though lesser in number than that of PLAN, have ensured that in the event of a face-off either on land border or at sea, China's Malacca dilemma becomes its Indian Ocean dilemma

#### [India, Singapore and Thailand holding mega naval exercise in Andaman Sea](#)

November 15, 2021, The Economic Times

The navies of India, Singapore and Thailand on Monday carried out a series of complex military drills in the Andaman Sea on the first day of a two-day mega naval exercise. The Indian Navy said the exercise highlights the growing synergy, coordination and cooperation in the maritime domain between the three friendly navies.

## **Pakistan**

### [Pakistan-China joint ventures face hurdles](#)

November 19, 2021, Siasat

The joint chamber has established an online platform to provide assistance in solving the problems and issues of Chinese companies pertaining to domestic policies and regulations.

### [Shaheen-1A ballistic missile test-fired](#)

November 26, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan conducted the successful test flight of Shaheen-1A surface-to-surface ballistic missile. The test flight was aimed at re-validating certain design and technical parameters of the weapon system.

### [Ban imposed on PTM leaders' entry to Balochistan](#)

November 23, 2021, Dawn

The Balochistan government has imposed a ban on the entry of leaders of Pashtoon Tahafuz Movement (PTM) Manzoor Pashteen, Mohsin Dawar, Ali Wazir and others into the province for 90 days.

### [Qatar gets clearance to buy stake in LNG terminal in Pakistan](#)

November 24, 2021, Dawn

The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) cleared state-run Qatar Energy's bid to acquire 49 per cent stakes in an upcoming private sector LNG terminal, paving the way for Qatar's first direct investment in Pakistan's energy market.

### [Drugs seized in two operations](#)

November 24, 2021, Dawn

The Pakistan Customs seized 300 kilograms of opium and 15 kilograms of Ice/Crystal in two separate operations in Jewani area of Gwadar district.

### [UK, Pakistan finalise accord to repatriate illegal migrants](#)

November 20, 2021, Dawn

The federal government finalised negotiations on a bilateral readmissions agreement with the UK under which former prime minister Nawaz Sharif could also be repatriated for staying illegally in Britain.

### [\\$3 bn gas pipeline project: No sovereign guarantee as EPC contractor, Russia tells Pakistan](#)

November 22, 2021, The News

The new legal firm hired by the Inter State Gas System (ISGS) has asked the authorities that Pakistan may face problems if the \$3 billion Pakistan Stream Gas Pipeline project is completed under the amended Inter Governmental Agreement (IGA) signed with Russia in Moscow.

### [Pakistan FM staunchly supporting Taliban: Dawar](#)

November 22, 2021, The News

Member National Assembly Mohsin Dawar has said that the foreign minister of Pakistan is acting like a foreign minister of the Taliban. Dawar made the remarks in a panel discussion on "Chaos in Afghanistan" at a local hotel. Participating in the discussion, Afghan journalist Lotufullah Najfizada said that Afghanistan did not have a capacity issue, it had a governance issue that needed to be resolved by Taliban.

### [TTP wants 'political office' in third country](#)

November 20, 2021, The Express Tribune

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) wants to open a political office in a third country which is one of the three demands the terrorist groups made to Pakistani authorities during their initial talks.

### [Pakistan's debt, liabilities cross Rs50tr](#)

November 25, 2021, The Express Tribune

For the first time ever, Pakistan's total debt and liabilities have crossed Rs50.5 trillion, an addition of Rs20.7 trillion under the current government alone.

### [US blacklists Chinese firms for allegedly aiding Pakistan's nuclear activities](#)

November 24, 2021, The Express Tribune

The US Commerce Department put 16 entities and individuals from China and Pakistan on its trade blacklist for contributing to Pakistan's nuclear activities or ballistic missile programme and in some cases their help with the Chinese military's quantum computing efforts, citing national security concerns

### [Saad Rizvi urges people to vote for TLP in next polls](#)

November 22, 2021, Dawn

Chief of the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) Hafiz Saad Rizvi has declared he would lay down his life but would not surrender to any oppressor, and urged the people to vote for his organisation in the next general elections.

## **Afghanistan**

### [US blacklists financial facilitator for Afghan affiliate of IS](#)

November 23, 2021, Dawn

The United States imposed sanctions on an individual it accused of acting as a financial facilitator for the militant Islamic State group's Afghanistan branch, in a move that follows a series of attacks in Kabul claimed by the militant group.

### [Taliban ban TV shows featuring women actors](#)

November 23, 2021, Dawn

The Taliban regime issued a new "religious guideline" that calls on the country's television channels to stop showing dramas and soap operas featuring women actors.

### [Afghan Taliban begin paying salaries to govt employees](#)

November 21, 2021, Dawn

Afghanistan's Taliban authorities said they had begun paying government employees who had not received a paycheck since the Islamists seized power and triggered a major financial crisis.

### [UAE holds talks with Taliban to run Kabul airport](#)

November 25, 2021, Dawn

The United Arab Emirates has held talks with the Taliban to run Kabul airport, going up against Gulf rival Qatar in a diplomatic tussle for influence with Afghanistan's new rulers.

### [US envoy Thomas West reacts to Taliban letter to US Congress](#)

November 20, 2021, The News

The United States Special Representative for Afghanistan, Thomas West, reacted to the letter of the Islamic Emirate to the US Congress that called for the release of Afghanistan's central bank assets. In a series of tweets, West said the US officials had made it clear to the Taliban years ago that taking power by force would result in non-humanitarian aid cut.

### [Taliban say Doha talks to open 'new chapter' of ties with US](#)

November 25, 2021, The News

Next week's talks between the United States and the Taliban in Doha - the second such meeting since the Islamists seized power - will open a "new chapter" in political ties, the group said. Washington said it would continue to hold talks with the Taliban following a meeting between the two sides in the Qatari capital on October 9-10.

### [UN raises \\$600 mn for Afghanistan aid](#)

November 23, 2021, The Hindu

The United Nations said that its flash appeal for more than \$600 million to support the humanitarian response in Afghanistan until the end of the year was now fully funded.

### [Pakistan allows Indian aid transit to Afghanistan](#)

November 23, 2021, Reuters

Pakistan's Cabinet granted permission to arch-rival India to use its land route to ship wheat aid to neighbouring Afghanistan where millions of people face hunger as a harsh winter sets in.

### [Chinese firms eye Afghanistan's lithium](#)

November 24, 2021, The Hindu

A number of Chinese companies have already begun "on-site inspections" of possible projects to tap lithium deposits in Afghanistan, having received the green light to do so from the Taliban regime, according to a report in the Chinese state media.

### [Hackers in Pakistan targeted Afghan users with links to previous govt](#)

November 17, 2021, Dawn

Hackers from Pakistan used Facebook to target people in Afghanistan with connections to the previous government during the Taliban's takeover of the country, the company's threat investigators said in an interview.

### [Taliban invited to next meeting of Afghanistan's neighbours](#)

November 17, 2021, Dawn

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said the Afghan Taliban would be invited to the third ministerial meeting of Afghanistan's neighbours. Mr Qureshi, at a meeting of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, said: "Afghanistan's interim government will also be invited to the next meeting of Afghanistan's neighbours."

### [Kabul mediating between Pakistan govt, TTP: Muttaqi](#)

November 15, 2021, Dawn

The Afghan Taliban are mediating between the Pakistan government and the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) but no agreement has been reached so far, says Afghanistan's acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi.



### [Qatar to act as US diplomatic representative in Afghanistan](#)

November 13, 2021, Dawn

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the Gulf nation of Qatar has agreed to represent American interests in Afghanistan following the closure of the US embassy in Kabul in late August. Blinken said Qatar will serve as the protecting power for the United States in Taliban-run Afghanistan, a move that suggests the Biden administration has little confidence that it will re-open the embassy in the near future.

### **Bangladesh**

#### [India, Bangladesh pact example of mutual respect: Army Chief](#)

November 24, 2021, The Hindu

The historic land boundary agreement between India and Bangladesh has set a unique example on resolving border disputes through mutual negotiations at a time when "certain" countries are trying to alter the status quo by force, said Army Chief Gen. Manoj Naravane on Wednesday without naming anyone.

#### [Why Pakistan's in & Bangladesh out of Biden's democracy](#)

November 26, 2021, The Time of India

As the US, and much of the world, gears up for Joe Biden's virtual democracy summit scheduled for December 9-10, it's clear that American interests in various countries, regions and other stakes played a large role in making of the guest list.

#### [India-Bangladesh ties passing through golden phase: Rajnath](#)

November 23, 2021, Hindustan Times

Rajnath shared photos of the event hosted by Bangladesh high commissioner Muhammad Imran and said the deepening cooperation between the two neighbours showed they were "strong" partners in the region

### **Nepal**

#### [Chinese spy agency playing active role to destabilise Nepal's relations with other nations: Report](#)

November 13, 2021, WION

A Nepalese daily has claimed to have access to a confidential document prepared by the Nepalese security officials which revealed the involvement of Chinese intelligence agency in playing an "active role" to sour Kathmandu's relations with other countries.

[India wants Nepal not to allow foreigners to use trans-border rail link, cites security](#)

November 25, 2021, The Print

Official sources say since India and Nepal have visa-free travel, other countries' nationals would make travel cumbersome due to immigration, customs and visa-checking procedures.

[Nepal won't allow third-country nationals to travel to India by rail](#)

November 21, 2021, Tribune India

India's security concern was one of the reasons why it took so long to finalise the SPA

## **Sri Lanka**

[TNA seeks joint U.S.-India role for Sri Lanka political solution](#)

November 27, 2021, The Hindu

Sri Lanka's Tamil National Alliance (TNA), the main parliamentary group representing Tamils of the war-affected north and east, has requested the United States to collaborate with India and jointly push for a political solution in the island nation.

[Sri Lanka awards port project to China after dropping Japan, India](#)

November 25, 2021, Nikkei Asia

Shipping containers at the main port of Colombo. Sri Lanka's location in the Indian Ocean and its deep harbors have made it strategically important under China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative. Sri Lanka will tap a Chinese company for a port project in Colombo, its largest city, that had been awarded to Japan and India before the partnership was scrapped early this year.

[Explained: The importance of India, Maldives and Sri Lanka trilateral exercise 'Dosti'](#)

November 25, 2021, The Indian Express

For many years after it was first launched in 1991, these exercises were bilateral, involving the Indian and the Maldives Coast Guards. In 2012, however, Sri Lanka joined these exercises for the first time.

## East & South East Asia

### China

#### [Xi Jinping's War on Tibetan Buddhism](#)

November 18, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

The party's communiqué mentions "national rejuvenation" eight times. The phrase may sound harmless, if a bit nationalistic. Yet a key component of national rejuvenation is unification, which in Beijing's view requires the destruction of minority cultures. Tibetans—who have been struggling against the party's attempts to erase their identity for more than 60 years—understand the danger of "national rejuvenation" all too well.

#### [Xi Jinping's Terrifying New China](#)

November 15, 2021, The Atlantic

China today is in the grip of the most concerted government campaign to assert greater control over society in decades, perhaps since the tumultuous days of Mao Zedong. Taken together, this deluge of dictates can be viewed as one element of Xi's broader agenda to mold a new Chinese society that will be instilled with proper socialist values—as he defines them—purged of corrupting individualism and other bad habits that have seeped in from foreign (read: Western) cultures, and thus girded for the next phase of national struggle: the quest for global greatness.

#### [Why Is China's Growth Rate Falling So Fast?](#)

November 17, 2021, The Project Syndicate

But the pandemic is not the only factor behind the slowdown. The government's green industrial policy, tighter regulation of the property sector, and blacklists of online platforms also have collectively curtailed growth.

#### [China's property crackdown sinks economic growth to 90s levels](#)

November 16, Al Jazeera

China's economy is slowing to the lows seen way back in 1990 — a price President Xi Jinping seems willing to pay to reduce its dependence on the property sector. It's a big stepdown from pre-pandemic rates closer to 7%. Given China's status as the world's second-biggest economy, it means softer demand for commodities pumped out by countries like Australia and Indonesia and slower spending by Chinese consumers who are crucial to multinationals from Apple Inc. to Volkswagen AG.

### [China Urges Local Governments to Spend More to Counter Slump](#)

November 25, 2021, Bloomberg

Premier Li Keqiang chaired a meeting of the State Council, China's cabinet, on Wednesday, urging local governments to have more ongoing construction of projects at the beginning of next year, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. It also called on them to make better use of proceeds from special bonds to expand domestic demand.

### [US-China tech war: state media questions Washington's intent on demanding chip supply data from TSMC, Samsung amid 'targeted sanction' concerns](#)

November 26, 2021, SCMP

The US government's recent request for chip supply data 'exposes its plot' to hold back China's semiconductor development, according to Xinhua. While no mainland Chinese firms were targeted by the US survey, it set off alarm bells in the country's semiconductor industry.

### [Lithuania 'could become isolated' due to unwise provocation against China](#)

November 26, 2021, Global Times

Although China has been compelled to downgrade diplomatic ties with Lithuania after the Baltic state challenged China's sovereignty over Taiwan and abandoned the internationally recognized one-China principle which the country's previous governments respected, the current Lithuanian government remains hostile and is being even more provocative, with Chinese analysts saying this kind of extreme and stupid anti-China policy could make the Baltic state act more like a "trouble maker" and become isolated in the region.

### [A visit to China's largest nucleic acid testing lab](#)

November 27, 2021, Global Times

As the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic has entered a stage of normalization, nucleic acid testing has become an essential part of life, allowing people in China to travel around freely. It is also a key measure for epidemic-affected regions to control viral transmission.

### [China-Germany relations won't seriously derail despite small bumps: Global Times editorial](#)

November 26, 2021, Global Times

Germany's Social Democrats, the Green Party and Free Democratic Party have sealed a deal for a new government. The deal mentioned China 12 times and said Germany will develop relations with China "in the dimensions of partnership, shaping competition and system rivalry." It also said, "As part of

the EU's one-China policy, we support the factual participation of democratic Taiwan in international organizations." The deal also interfered in the affairs related to China's Xinjiang and Hong Kong.

#### [China vows to soon set up a working group with US on climate action](#)

November 25, 2021, China Daily

China will strive to promote as soon as possible the establishment of the Working Group on Enhancing Climate Action in the 2020s with the United States, which is included in a joint communique issued earlier this month, an environmental official said.

### **Japan**

#### [Japan, US Conduct First Anti-Submarine Drill in South China Sea](#)

November 17, 2021, Benar News

Naval ships from Japan and the United States conducted their first ever anti-submarine warfare exercise in the South China Sea, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force said, as Tokyo steps up joint maritime activities in those disputed waters with Western and Southeast Asian partners.

#### [EU chief's Japan visit postponed amid COVID variant fears](#)

November 27, 2021, The Japan Times

European Council President Charles Michel's visit to Japan has been "postponed," his spokesman has said, amid concern over a new coronavirus variant.

#### [Japan's foreign minister airs concerns over Russian military activity](#)

November 25, 2021, The Japan Times

Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi voiced "serious concerns" over a recent increase in military activity by Russia and China near Japan in phone talks Thursday with Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov, a government source said.

#### [Japan, India working on oil-stock release with U.S., timing unclear -sources](#)

November 23, 2021, Reuters

Japanese and Indian officials are working on ways to release national reserves of crude oil in tandem with the United States and other major economies, but the timing of such a release remains unclear.

### [Japan PM vows to step up defence amid growing threats from China, N Korea](#)

November 27, 2021, Business Standard

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida vowed to create a stronger Self-Defense Force to protect the country amid growing threats from China and North Korea.

### [Japan, Vietnam express serious concern about South China Sea](#)

November 24, 2021, Business Standard

The leaders of Japan and Vietnam expressed serious concern on Wednesday about the situation in the South China Sea and any unilateral actions aimed at altering the status quo, and agreed to work together to sustain free and open sea lanes as tensions escalate in the region amid China's rise.

## **Korea**

### [Connecting people and deepening ties: India-South Korea relations](#)

November 18, 2021, ORF

Both India and South Korea stand to gain strategically and economically from the deepening of people-to-people ties.

### [China's Coal Shortage Threatens Farmers in India and Truckers in South Korea](#)

November 11, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

A coal shortage that led to an energy crisis in China is rippling beyond its borders, threatening to disrupt supply chains and farming in countries that rely on its exports of a chemical used in fertilizer and diesel exhaust systems. India and South Korea are experiencing shortages of urea, which is produced using coal, since China placed new restrictions on exports. It is widely used in India as a fertilizer and in South Korea to produce urea solution, which is used to reduce diesel emissions in vehicles and factories.

### [S. Korean exports to India drop 3.5% from pre-pandemic level](#)

November 10, 2021, The Korea Herald

South Korea's exports to India shrank 3.5 percent in the first nine months of this year from 2019 due to import controls and a delay in the recovery of the emerging economy, a top business lobby said.

### [Satellite imagery indicates continued operation of North Korean N-reactor](#)

November 25, 2021, Business Standard

The suspicion is in line with the monitoring results by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which said the North appears to have continued operations at the Yongbyon nuclear reactor

### **Southeast Asia**

#### [Is there really a tech boom in Southeast Asia?](#)

November 26, 2021, Hindustan Times

The digital and tech industry of Southeast Asia (SEA) is witnessing an unprecedented boom since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. According to Forbes, venture capital (VC) investments have grown more than five times between 2015 and 2020, when compared to an only 1.4 times increase over the same period in India and China, two of the leading start-up countries. The first half of 2021 has seen record-breaking VC investments of roughly \$10 billion, which is more than all annual records to date along with a whopping \$101 billion worth of deals that took place.

#### [President Xi: China will not seek dominance over Southeast Asia](#)

November 22, 2021, Al Jazeera

Chinese leader Xi Jinping says his country will not seek dominance over Southeast Asia or bully its smaller neighbours as friction over the South China Sea intensifies.

#### [Germany to Vietnam: These countries are witnessing a fresh Covid-19 surge](#)

November 24, 2021, The Indian Express

The rising case count is a cause for concern as cases are soaring at places despite high rates of vaccination. As economies opened up and countries bustled with activity believing that they are well past the worst phase of the pandemic, many countries have started reporting a surge in infections once again.

#### [China-ASEAN summit begins without a Myanmar representative](#)

November 22, 2021, Al Jazeera

Non-attendance comes after the regional bloc rejects China's requests to include Myanmar's top general Min Aung Hlaing in the virtual summit.

### [Top U.S. diplomat for Asia to visit four ASEAN countries](#)

November 26, 2021, FX Empire

The top U.S. diplomat for East Asia will visit Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand from the weekend after President Joe Biden pledged stepped up engagement with Southeast Asia, a key battleground in his contest for influence with China.

### [India-ASEAN relations in the maritime domain—an analysis](#)

November 17, 2021, ORF

Both India and ASEAN need to act on the ample opportunities available to advance a cooperative and mutually beneficial maritime relationship.



## Central & West Asia

### Central Asia

#### [India pitches for Chabahar and INSTC to connect Central Asia with seas](#)

November 26, 2021, The Economic Times

Foreign Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday pitched for consultative, transparent and participatory form of connectivity which “conform to the most basic principle of international law – respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity” in what can viewed as a message to China on its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that passes thorough Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK).

#### [Rebooted Russian-Uzbek ties stabilizing Central Asia](#)

November 24, 2021, Asia Times

Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev’s visit to Moscow on November 19 at the invitation of President Vladimir Putin resulted in a joint statement on information technology and a slew of documents on trade and economic cooperation, but its strategic significance cannot be lost on regional capitals.

#### [Central Asian elites choose China over Russia](#)

November 25, 2021, East Asia Forum

Since 2019, more than 40 protests were held against ‘Chinese expansion’ in Central Asia. Yet Central Asian elites have hardly had a bad word to say. On the contrary, they suppressed these protests, denied that China’s goal was expansion and even requested their publics be grateful to China. No wonder some Russian commentators are worried about Russia’s waning influence.

#### [Pakistan, Russia's Ural region sign MOU to deepen ties](#)

November 26, 2021, ANI

Pakistan and the Russian region of Ural signed a memorandum of understanding to boost bilateral cooperation, the Pakistani embassy in Russia said.

#### [Crypto Miners Are Worsening Kazakhstan’s Energy Crisis](#)

November 18, 2021, Oil Price

Energy demand is high and supplies are low from Europe to Asia. Many countries in the European Union have enacted emergency provisions to help their most vulnerable citizens survive a winter of sky-high energy bills. China is returning to coal with a vengeance while India threatens to run out of it entirely. Supply chains are disrupted around the globe and inflation is on the rise worldwide. In Kazakhstan, the government has kept energy prices

artificially low, but that has invited a new and unforeseen challenge: the rise of cryptocurrency mining is now compounding the energy crisis.

## **West Asia**

### [Indian Military Chief Tours Israel, Receives Briefing on Security Threats](#)

November 19, 2021, Jewish News Syndicate

Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Manoj Mukund Naravane observed Israel's northern borders and also paid tribute to Indian army casualties that fell during World War I.

### [Chabahar Sees Increase in Traffic as Taliban Backs Trade Via Port](#)

November 21, 2021, The Times of India

The Chabahar port in Iran developed by India seems to be resuming normal operations after assurances by the Taliban that they want good diplomatic and trade ties with India and that they were going to support the role of the port in facilitating regional and global trade.

### [RIL Withdraws NCLT Application For O2C Hiveoff, To Start Fresh Talks with Saudi Aramco For Stake Sale](#)

November 20, 2021, The Economic Times

Reliance Industries has dropped plans to hive off its oil-to-chemicals (O2C) business, intended as part of a potential stake sale to Saudi Aramco, making way for fresh negotiations between the two companies.

### ['Outstanding Discussions' with UAE, Says Indian Oil Minister](#)

November 17, 2021, Gulf News

Indian oil minister Hardeep Singh Puri said he had "outstanding" discussions with UAE counterparts on oil prices.

### [China Halts Work on Military Base in UAE After US Intervention: Report](#)

November 21, 2021, WION

China has halted the work on a military base in the UAE after the intervention of the United States. Earlier, US media had reported that China was constructing a military facility on a secret port in the Emirates.

### [US Defence Secretary Pledges To Counter Iran During Bahrain Visit](#)

November 20, 2021, AL Jazeera

US Defence Secretary has pledged to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, as negotiations remain stalled over Tehran's tattered atomic deal with

world powers, in comments that appeared aimed at reassuring the US's Gulf Arab allies.

### [US Senators Move To Block \\$650m Arms Sale To Saudi Arabia](#)

November 19, 2021, Reuters

A joint resolution of disapproval to block a proposed \$650 million in U.S. arms sales to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was introduced by Republicans Rand Paul and Mike Lee, as well as Bernie Sanders who caucuses with Democrats.

### [US Said To Raise Proposed Interim Deal With Iran in Talks With Israel](#)

November 17, 2021, The Times of Israel

The US sources said the proposal was for Iran to suspend a disallowed nuclear activity such as enriching uranium to 60 percent, in exchange for the US and allied countries releasing some frozen Iranian money, or issuing sanctions waivers on humanitarian goods.

### [Hamas To Be Declared a Terrorist Group by UK](#)

November 20, 2021, BBC News

UK's Home Secretary Priti Patel has announced she is seeking to declare the whole of Palestinian militant group Hamas a terrorist organisation. The military wing of the group which controls Gaza is already designated as a terrorist organisation by the UK.

### [US Warns Israel Attacks On Iran Nuclear Program Are Counterproductive](#)

November 22, 2021, The Times of Israel

US officials have warned Israel that attacks against the Iranian nuclear program are counterproductive and have caused Tehran to rebuild an even more efficient enrichment system.

### [As Hopes for Nuclear Deal Fade, Iran Rebuilds and Risks Grow](#)

November 21, 2021, The New York Times

With Iran's new administration preparing for its first international nuclear negotiations, there are signs that there will be no going back to the 2015 agreement.

## United States

### United States

#### [The COP26 Summit and the Global Age of Shams](#)

November 15, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

President Biden boasted about America's new climate goals and its dedication to them. Yet in the same week he begged OPEC+ to bail out the world economy and his presidency by pumping more fossil fuels. Let future presidents face the rough contours of a world without fossil fuels; this one means to get re-elected, no matter how much greenhouse gas spews into the sky.

#### [The Campaign to Distract Biden from Asia](#)

November 22, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

President Biden's original plan to focus on Asia made good political sense. Unfortunately, China, Russia and Iran understand the situation as clearly as the White House does, and these powers want Mr. Biden and the nation he leads to fail. They are doing what they can to keep the president from focusing on Asia.

#### [India, US finalise deal on digital service tax](#)

November 25, 2021, The Times of India

A day after the conclusion of the India-US Trade Policy Forum meeting, the two countries decided on a "transitional approach" to digital service tax imposed by the government, providing it relief from the proposed American retaliatory action, while comforting tech giants such as Amazon, Google and Facebook that face the levy.

#### [Dynamism in India-U.S. ties](#)

November 23, 2021, The Hindu

The trajectory of India-U.S. bilateral ties continues to go up. While there are regular interactions among officials at various levels and across sectors, as well as people-to-people engagement, there are no formal interactions between Members of Parliament in India and members of the U.S. Congress.

#### [U.S. lawmakers defy China by meeting with officials in Taiwan](#)

November 26, 2021, CNBC

Five U.S. lawmakers arrived in Taiwan on Thursday to meet with government officials, defying an admonition from Beijing to stay away from the hotly contested democratic island.

[India invited to US-hosted 'Summit for Democracy' in December](#)

November 26, 2021, Mint

India has been invited to the US-hosted "Summit for Democracy" next month, a person familiar with the development said

[Biden administration weighing how to approach Beijing Winter Olympic Games](#)

November 17, 2021, CNN

The Biden administration is still weighing how to approach the upcoming Beijing Winter Olympic Games, including the possibility of a diplomatic boycott, but hasn't reached a final conclusion, officials familiar with the matter said.

## Europe & Russia

### Europe

#### [New pathways needed to conclude EU-India FTA negotiations](#)

November 12, 2021, Media India Group

The European Union and India have been negotiating, on and off, a free trade agreement since the past 14 years. It is time to conclude the talks and reach an agreement as both sides need each other more than ever and time for talking is over and action is the need of the hour. An agreement can come with some innovative thinking by the EU, as well as India.

#### [EU extends human rights sanctions, including on Chinese officials](#)

November 24, 2021, Reuters

European Union ambassadors approved the renewal of sanctions on four Chinese officials and one Chinese entity on Wednesday as part of an extension of a human rights blacklist, two diplomats said.

#### [China's EU envoy says no flexibility on Taiwan, sanctions, trade](#)

November 16, 2021, Reuters

China will never change its position on Taiwan and will also not shift its view that the European Union must lift its sanctions if a new Sino-EU investment deal is to be ratified, China's ambassador to the EU said.

#### [EU defence cooperation: Council launches the 4th wave of new PESCO projects](#)

November 16, 2021, Europa

The Council adopted a decision today updating the list of projects to be undertaken under the EU permanent structured cooperation (PESCO). As a result, 14 new projects will be added to the list of the 46 existing ones that have been developed under PESCO since December 2017.

### Russia

#### [Ahead of Putin visit, India to finalise ₹5,000 crore worth defence deal](#)

November 23, 2021, Live Mint

The Indian defence ministry is expected to decide on Tuesday the finalisation of a deal worth over ₹5,000 crore with Russia for the manufacture of 7.5 lakh AK 203 assault rifles. This comes weeks before Russian president Vladimir Putin's visit to India.

### [Maiden India-Russia 2+2 dialogue on December 6](#)

November 27, 2021, Hindustan Times

President Vladimir Putin's decision to travel to New Delhi reflects the importance attached by Russia to its special and privileged strategic partnership with India.

### [Russia, Serbia reach deal on gas price for next six months](#)

November 25, 2021, Reuters

Russia has agreed to continue selling Serbia gas at the current price of \$270 per 1,000 cubic metres over the next six months, TASS news agency quoted Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic as saying on Thursday after he met with President Vladimir Putin.

### [Putin Spokesman: Russia Won't Invade Ukraine – Unless it's 'Provoked'](#)

November 23, 2021, US News

Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman pledged Tuesday that his country will not launch a war with Ukraine, but he warned of threats from Kyiv that may require military action.

### [Russia to strengthen cooperation with China despite Western sabotage: Putin](#)

November 19, 2021, Business Standard

Relations between Russia and China have reached their highest level in history, and the two countries will step up cooperation further, Russian President Vladimir Putin has said.

## Africa & Latin America

### Latin America

#### [Argentina not likely to extend special layoff measures, Labor Minister says](#)

November 25, 2021, MercoPress

Argentine Labor Minister Claudio Moroni Thursday said it was “highly likely” that the double severance money and the ban on dismissals decreed as a part of the emergency measures to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic will not be extended after December 31, since the economic situation was getting back to normal.

#### [A slight opening of Chinese market to Brazilian beef; Russia increases the list of abattoirs certified to export](#)

November 25, 2021, MercoPress

China's Administration of Customs, GACC announced on Wednesday it was authorizing the unloading of Brazilian beef, certified before September 4th., the date when the suspension was caused by the confirmation of two atypical cases of “mad cow” disease in Brazil, (in Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso), became effective. Brazil at the time, and following a joint protocol agreed with Chinese food authorities, voluntarily suspended beef shipments to China, while local processing plants became increasingly restless given the tons of certified beef forcibly stored before the suspension date.

#### [US to drop FARC from list of international terrorist groups](#)

November 25, 2021, MercoPress

The Government of the United States has announced it would be dropping Colombia's Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) from the Terrorist Group list. The announcement came as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was taking part in Colombia celebrations marking the 5th anniversary of the peace deal between the South American country's government and the guerrilla group.

#### [Bi-Oceanic Corridor to bring Mercosur closer to Asia, Paraguay's FM says](#)

November 24, 2021, MercoPress

Paraguay's Foreign Minister Euclides Acevedo said the Bi-Oceanic Corridor will bring Mercosur's entire economic development closer to Asia. His remarks came at a press conference after meeting with his Japanese counterpart Yoshimasa Hayashi in Tokyo earlier this week. Both top diplomats announced they had agreed to advance a mutual cooperation agenda and also found it necessary to implement integration and economic reactivation projects to



“revitalize bilateral economic relations,” according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry in a statement after the meeting.

### [Colombia-Ecuador border to reopen Dec.1, presidents agree](#)

November 22, 2021, MercoPress

The Presidents of Colombia (Iván Duque) and Ecuador (Guillermo Lasso), Sunday agreed to reopen the borders between the two countries as of Dec. 1 after they were closed in March 2020, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Both leaders reached that decision after a meeting in Quito. “We have agreed that the next December 1 will be given to the reopening of our borders. An orderly, structured, well-focused reopening, to continue maintaining between the two countries all the epidemiological controls that guarantee the safety of our citizens.”

## **Africa**

### [UK urges citizens to leave Ethiopia; Irish diplomats forced out](#)

November 25, 2021, Africa Times

The British government is urging its citizens to leave Ethiopia immediately, because of conflict that has now lasted more than a year but appears to be intensifying in recent days. “The conflict in Ethiopia is deteriorating quickly,” said UK Minister for Africa Vicky Ford. “In the coming days we may see the fighting move closer to Addis Ababa, which could severely limit options for British Nationals to leave Ethiopia.”

### [Tired of waiting, Africa needs to stride toward a post-Covid future](#)

November 22, 2021, Africa Times

As European countries are experiencing a fresh surge in Covid-19 infections and are beginning to target the unvaccinated as the culprit, it’s easy to forget the yawning gap between the West and the developing world. In Africa, untold millions have been infected with the disease, with the number of deaths spiking since this summer. Worse still, an analysis from the World Health Organization (WHO) indicates that the true number of infections could be as much as seven times higher than currently reported figures.

### [Apple sues Israeli firm scrutinized over Pegasus spyware tools](#)

November 24, 2021, Africa Times

Apple announced on Tuesday it has filed suit against an Israeli company that’s been closely monitored for its role in supplying spyware to foreign governments—a number of them on the African continent—and placed on a U.S. entity list for its development of Pegasus surveillance tools.

[Report puts Kabila, BGFI at center of global financial investigation](#)

November 19, 2021, Africa Times

Explosive allegations in an investigative report released Friday put former president Joseph Kabila and his associates at the center of embezzlement claims of at least US\$138 million taken from the Democratic Republic of Congo's state coffers.

[Botswana confirms COVID variant; WHO plans special meeting, UK bans flights](#)

November 26, 2021, Africa Times

Botswana confirmed on Thursday that a new COVID-19 variant, one that's causing great concern in southern Africa and beyond, was detected in four people described as travelers. Botswana's Presidential COVID-19 Task Force said the four cases of the B.1.1.529 variant were recorded on Monday. All four cases happened in people who are vaccinated, the task force added.



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