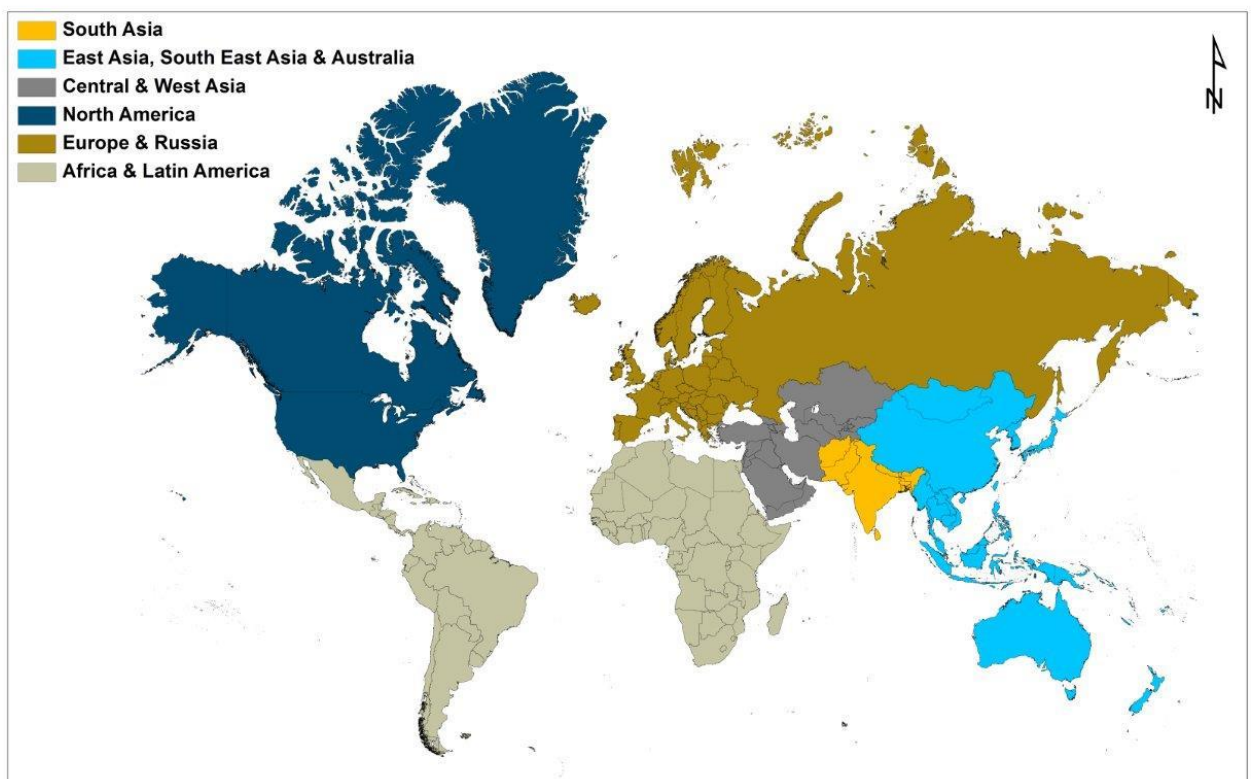




Delhi Policy Group

DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



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ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group is among India's oldest independent think tanks with its primary focus on international and strategic issues of critical national interest. Over the past decades, the Delhi Policy Group has established itself in both domestic and international circles, particularly in the area of national security.

In keeping with India's increasing global profile as a leading power and the accompanying dynamism of India's foreign and security policy, the Delhi Policy Group has expanded its focus areas to include India's broader regional and global role; India's initiatives to strengthen its strategic periphery; India's political, security and connectivity challenges and policies across the Indo-Pacific; and the strategic partnerships that advance India's rise. To support these goals, the DPG undertakes research, publishes policy reports and organises conferences on strategic and geo-political, geo-economic, and defence and security issues.

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South Asia

India

[Pak. aside, Neighbourhood First policy for South Asia: Jaishankar](#)

December 5, 2019, The Hindu

India must be non-reciprocal and generous with smaller neighbours of South Asia, said External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar at an event to celebrate the centenary of the late Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral here. The Minister said the Gujral Doctrine was crafted in the 1990s when relationship with Pakistan had "some optimism", which was eroded after the series of cross-border terror attacks.

[Pakistan minister blames suspension of trade with India for hike in food prices](#)

December 4, 2019, The Economic Times

A senior Pakistani minister has blamed the suspension of trade with India for the current price hike of food items in the country as the prices of tomatoes skyrocketed to Rs. 300 per kg.

[Indian Army requires 200 armoured fighting vehicles for Pakistan border](#)

December 5, 2019, The Economic Times

The army recently announced its plan to procure 198 wheeled armoured fighting vehicles (AFV) for reconnaissance and support to tank regiments in mechanised warfare. The vehicles are meant for replacing the army's ageing Soviet origin BRDM combat reconnaissance patrol vehicles.

[India 'Chased' a Chinese Ship from its EEZ but US Intrusions Go Unchallenged](#)

December 5, 2019, The Wire

Going by media reports, it would appear that India has scored a great naval victory in "chasing away" a Chinese research vessel from the Andaman Sea. The truth is more complicated and prosaic.

[US committed to common vision for India defence ties: Pentagon official](#)

December 5, 2019, Business Standard

The US is committed to a common vision for major defence partnership with India and will advance this during the '2+2' ministerial talks to be held later this month, a top Pentagon official told lawmakers.

[PM Modi Accepts Invitation To Visit Brussels For India-EU Summit](#)

December 3, 2019, NDTV

The invitation was extended by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen during a telephonic conversation with PM Modi on Monday, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

['\\$5 trillion economy will enhance ease of living,' says PM Modi](#)

December 6, 2019, Business Today

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that BJP government will be the 'enabler and promoter' of the \$5 trillion economy dream. Speaking at the HT Leadership Summit that is currently underway, PM Modi said, "The \$5 trillion economy target is related to the better future of all Indians. This dream will enhance the ease of living and for this our government will be enabler and promoter. We have the motto of reform and perform."

[View: India to be a proactive, generous neighbour to Sri Lanka](#)

November 30, 2019, The Economic Times

"Sri Lanka will not be party to any activity that could be a security concern to India.... Sri Lanka would not encourage anything that would jeopardise the security of the Indian Ocean." The new Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa spoke clearly and with conviction at the presidential banquet in Delhi on Friday evening. It is an assurance India will monitor carefully, as the two neighbours turn a new chapter in their chequered relationship.

Pakistan

[Australia to end bilateral aid to Pakistan](#)

December 3, 2019, The News

The Australian Government will cease all bilateral aid to Pakistan, which includes support for successful programmes helping poor women and girls, as funds for development assistance are diverted to the Pacific.

[Pak exports up by 9.6% in Nov, imports cut by 17.53%](#)

December 2, 2019, The News

Pakistan's exports of goods during November 2019 have increased by 9.6 percent to \$2.02 billion while imports declined by 17.53 percent to \$3.815 billion over corresponding month of last year.

[‘Govt took \\$10 bn loan from 24 countries, global lenders’](#)

December 5, 2019, The News

The government has admitted to having obtained a total of \$10.37 billion debt from different countries and international lenders till September 30, 2019.

[‘IMF preferred silence on poverty, unemployment in Pakistan’](#)

December 5, 2019, The News

IMF made projections on macroeconomic fronts for Pakistan but preferred to remain silent on poverty and unemployment figures under three-year \$6 billion Extended Fund Facility.

[CPEC Authority Ordinance placed before NA](#)

December 5, 2019, Dawn

The Pakistan Government laid the controversial China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Ordinance, 2019, before the National Assembly, the opening day of the winter session, despite the opposition’s protest.

[Inflation surges to nine-year high](#)

December 5, 2019, Dawn

Inflation rose to 12.7 per cent year-on-year, the highest level in nine years mainly driven by an increase in prices of food items in Pakistan. Inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), edged up by 1.3% over the previous month after the PBS revised its calculation methodology by setting the new base year 2015-16 instead of the previous 2007-08 financial year.

[Iran asks Pakistan to help find missing soldiers](#)

December 4, 2019, Dawn

Iran has requested Pakistan for help in recovering three soldiers who were kidnapped near the Pak-Iran border this year during a meeting at Taftan. It also discussed the ongoing fencing on the border which commenced a few months ago.

[Govt blames price hike on trade ban with India, weather](#)

December 4, 2019, Dawn

Pakistan Prime Minister’s Adviser on Finance & Revenue Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh and Revenue Minister Hammad Azhar, attributed the prevailing price hike to suspension of trade with India, failure of provinces in keeping administrative

control over the middleman and seasonal factors. The government's economic team has forecast easing out of inflationary pressure in the next two months.

[PTI govt secures \\$1.3b budget support and crisis response loan from ADB](#)

December 6, 2019, The Express Tribune

The Asian Development Bank approved \$1.3 billion budgetary support loan for Pakistan, including \$1 billion in crisis response facility to shore up low official foreign exchange reserves.

Afghanistan

[Political solution needed in Afghanistan: NATO](#)

December 5, 2019, Tolo News

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at a press briefing in London said: "We believe that we need a political negotiated solution in Afghanistan...We are committed to continue to support Afghanistan because we strongly believe that the best way NATO can support peace efforts is to train, assist and advise the Afghan security forces so that Taliban understand that they will never win on the battlefield," Stoltenberg said.

[World Bank assesses needs of Afghanistan after peace settlement](#)

December 5, 2019, Tolo News

According to a World Bank report, Afghanistan will need continued financial support from the international community following a potential political settlement. The World Bank concludes that Afghanistan will require \$6 billion to \$8 billion a year in international grants between 2020 and 2024 to fund basic services, support faster economic growth, and consolidate and sustain any potential reduction in violence following a political settlement with the Taliban.

[Taliban and US resume Afghan peace talks](#)

November 30, 2019, Digital Journal

President Trump announced that peace talks with the Afghan Taliban had resumed during a surprise visit to Afghanistan. Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed that the talks are ongoing.

[NATO will prevent ISIS from reviving in Afghanistan: Stoltenberg](#)

December 1, 2019, Khaama Press

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will prevent revival of the ISIS caliphate in Afghanistan said the secretary general.

[Afghan man arrested in India airport with 1kg gold in his shoes](#)

December 2, 2019, Khaama Press

An Afghan man was arrested by the Indian custom police at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi while he was smuggling 1kg gold by hiding it in his shoes.

[Afghanistan cancels contract to US gold, copper miner](#)

December 1, 2019, Mining.com

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani cancelled the contracts held by the Turkish Afghan Mining Company TAMC and the Afghan Gold and Mineral Company AGMC, which allowed them to exploit the Badakhshan gold mine and the Balkhab copper mine in the northern Sar-e-Pul province.

Bangladesh

[Bangladesh on the frontline of climate crisis](#)

September 5, 2019, Al Jazeera

Bangladesh is one of the world's most vulnerable nations to the impacts of climate change. Millions of people in its southern coastal region face displacement due to rising sea levels and erratic weather conditions.

[Bangladesh top court defers Khaleda Zia's bail hearing](#)

December 5, 2019, India Today

With authorities in Bangladesh failing to submit the medical report of jailed former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Supreme Court on Thursday deferred the hearing of her bail application, according to media reports.

[Ruckus in Bangladesh Supreme Court as health report of Khaleda Zia delayed](#)

December 5, 2019, News on Air

The Supreme Court of Bangladesh witnessed a ruckus by a section of lawyers allegedly owing allegiance to the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

[Bangladesh is deliberately blocking Rohingya refugee children from education, report says](#)

December 3, 2019, CNN

Rohingya refugee children living in a sprawling network of camps in Bangladesh are being denied access to education in a deliberate effort by authorities to prevent them from integrating with local communities, according to a new report by Human Rights Watch released.

[Japan-Bangladesh ties: Riding the next wave of globalisation](#)

December 5, 2019, The Daily Star

The patterns of globalisation are changing. Global cross-border flows—of trade, capital, knowledge, resources, transportation and culture—are shifting towards Asia. By 2040, Asia could account for more than half of the world's GDP and around 40 percent of its consumption.

Nepal

[Nepal gears up for tourism challenge with swanky new airport](#)

December 3, 2019, Live Mint

Four and a half years after a devastating earthquake in April 2015 ravaged Nepal, the small hilly nation aims to reclaim its standing on the world tourism map with plans to attract Buddhist pilgrims from India, Bhutan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, besides countries like Japan, with a spanking new international airport close to the birthplace of Buddha.

[Nepal must prepare for climate migration](#)

December 6, 2019, Nepali Times

In the past, Nepalis have migrated to India for seasonal labour and military recruitment. Today they fly overseas for work. Tomorrow they may have to migrate in increasing numbers because of climate-induced disasters.

[Nepal's territorial flare-ups with India and China test its finesse](#)

December 3, 2019, Nikkei Asian Review

The small nation, with Mount Everest on its edge, has long relied on India to support its economy. More recently it has turned to China to reduce that reliance and soak up Belt and Road investment. But the government in Kathmandu faces

the challenge of soothing public anger that, left unbottled, could endanger its whole strategy.

[Nepal, China trade grows after reopening of border point](#)

December 1, 2019, Xinhua Net

Trade has been on the rise between Nepal and China after the reopening of Tatopani-Zhangmu border point earlier this year, according to data from Nepal's Department of Customs.

Sri Lanka

[Won't allow third country affect our ties: Gotabaya on India's China worry](#)

November 30, 2019, The Indian Express

In one-on-one talks for an hour Friday with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, visiting Sri Lanka President Gotabaya Rajapaksa is said to have conveyed that he will not allow "any third country or third force" to come in the way of the strong bilateral ties between Delhi and Colombo.

[Dilemmas of Sri Lanka](#)

December 6, 2019, FT

Whatever may be the history of Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the way he thinks, he has to function as the President of the people who voted for him as well as those who voted against him, during his tenure.

[Sajith Premadasa appointed as Opposition Leader](#)

December 5, 2019, Colombo Page

Sajith Premadasa has been appointed the Leader of United National Party, while former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has been appointed Deputy Leader.

[International media watchdog accuses Sri Lanka's new government of harassing journalists](#)

December 3, 2019, Colombo Page

The international media watch dog Reporters Sans Borders (RSF) shared concerns of Sri Lanka's journalists about searches, interrogations and acts of intimidation to which they have been subjected since Gotabaya Rajapaksa was sworn in as President.

[Afghanistan to use Sri Lanka's experience to bring sustainable peace](#)

December 3, 2019, Colombo Page

Afghanistan would use the successful experiences of world countries, especially Sri Lanka to bring long lasting peace, the war-torn country's leader said. President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani made this remark at a meeting with outgoing Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Kabul Gagan P. Bulathsinghala, Tuesday morning at the Presidential Palace in Kabul.

[Sri Lanka and the Sino-Indian rivalry](#)

December 5, 2019, Business Standard

The politically astute and reportedly pro-China Gotabaya Rajapaksa will cultivate both India and China, notwithstanding the \$450 million credit line extended by India to Sri Lanka and their determination to fight terrorism. Sri Lanka wants "equidistant" ties with all countries.

[Sri Lankan Prez invites Indian companies for investment in the country](#)

December 5, 2019, News On Air

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has invited Indian companies for investment in the country. In a message, he called upon India and China to place their trust and invest in Sri Lanka's future while respecting its sovereignty. Since his taking over last month, Sri Lanka has been calling upon global powers including India, Japan and Australia to bring investments and not to allow them to be dependent on China only.

East & South East Asia

China

[HK economy foots the bill for rioting: China Daily editorial](#)

December 5, 2019, China Daily

Innocent as most people in the city might be, Hong Kong society as a whole is paying a heavy price for the months-long social unrest that has sent the special administrative region's economy on a downward spiral.

[Washington continues witch hunt against its bugbear Huawei: China Daily editorial](#)

December 5, 2019, China Daily

Ever since the Chinese telecommunications equipment manufacturer was targeted by Washington as a national security threat, the fate of Huawei in the United States seems to have been determined.

[End to violence only remedy for HK's ills: China Daily editorial](#)

December 4, 2019, China Daily

Economic difficulties often serve as the blasting fuse for public anger. But in Hong Kong it has been the other way round. The public anger that has been deliberately sparked to create trouble for China has caused trials and tribulations for the special administrative region's economy.

[US bill on Xinjiang sabotages fight against terrorism and extremism: Editorial](#)

December 4, 2019, China Daily

The Uygur Act of 2019 passed by the United States House of Representatives on Tuesday is not just a vicious misrepresentation of China's legitimate de-extremist endeavors, it is gross interference in its domestic affairs, and a naked attempt to disrupt China's national rejuvenation.

[China's climate leadership well demonstrated: China Daily editorial](#)

December 2, 2019, China Daily

In yet another warning of the increasingly dire climate change situation the world now is facing, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Sunday that there is a danger global warming could pass the "point of no return".

[Price to be paid by US for its meddling: China Daily editorial](#)

December 2, 2019, China Daily

China announced on Monday that it has suspended its approval for US warships to visit Hong Kong and imposed sanctions on US NGOs, such as the National Endowment for Democracy, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, the International Republican Institute, and Freedom House, among others, which have acted "badly" by helping to incite the unrest in the special administrative region.

[Despite differences, Europe should realize there is strength in unity with China](#)

December 5, 2019, Global Times

China-EU relations have forged ahead to an unprecedented level despite passing through twists and turns since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1975. Although win-win cooperation has become the theme of ties, conflicts and frictions are emerging.

[Targeting China cannot save NATO](#)

December 5, 2019, Global Times

After the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Leaders Meeting ended in London on Wednesday, the leaders issued the London Declaration, which said, "China's growing influence and international policies present both opportunities and challenges that we need to address together as an Alliance." This is the first time that a NATO summit listed China as an independent topic and that China is involved in the joint declaration.

[With ties fraying across the Atlantic, will Europe realize futility of toeing the US line?](#)

December 5, 2019, Global Times

The recent row between a German high-ranking official and the US is emblematic of the state of US-Europe relations. During a program on Germany's ARD TV show, German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier defended Berlin's decision not to ban Chinese telecom titan Huawei by saying his country had "not imposed a boycott" on US tech companies in the wake of the National Security Agency spying affair, when it was revealed that US authorities had tapped Chancellor Angela Merkel's phone.

[Xinjiang's peace, prosperity unnerve US](#)

December 4, 2019, Global Times

The US House of Representatives passed the so-called Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2019 on Wednesday morning Beijing time. The bill requires the Trump administration to publicly denounce China's policy toward the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, impose sanctions on Xinjiang officials under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, and restrict exports of technologies to Xinjiang, unscrupulously attempting to exercise long-arm jurisdiction over Xinjiang.

[CPPCC committee slams U.S. House approval of Xinjiang-related bill](#)

December 5, 2019, Xinhua

The Committee of Ethnic and Religious Affairs of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee on Thursday condemned the passing of a bill on Xinjiang-related issues by the U.S. House of Representatives.

[Japan's national security advisor to visit China](#)

December 5, 2019, Xinhua

Head of Japan's national Security Council Shigeru Kitamura will pay a visit to China from Dec. 5 to 7, Foreign Ministry spokesperson HuaChunying announced here Thursday.

[China urges U.S. to learn lessons from 9/11 attacks, stop double standards on anti-terrorism](#)

December 5, 2019, Xinhua

China warned Wednesday that if the United States continues to play with double standards on anti-terrorism or even tries to infringe upon other countries' sovereignty and security, it will end up swallowing a bitter fruit with its own interests harmed.

Japan

[India and Japan hold inaugural security talks](#)

December 1, 2019, The Asahi Shimbun

India said that ties with Japan are the key to stability in the Indo-Pacific region as the two countries held their inaugural foreign and defense ministerial dialogue in New Delhi last week, with the aim of further bolstering their strategic partnership.

[Iran proposes Rouhani visit to Japan amid nuclear impasse](#)

December 4, 2019, Japan Today

Iran has proposed that President Hassan Rouhani visit Japan, a U.S. ally which also has close relations with Tehran, to try to resolve Iran's nuclear impasse with Washington, Kyodo news agency reported.

[Abe says Japan-S Korea summit being arranged in China in late December](#)

December 3, 2019, Japan Today

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said he is arranging to meet South Korean President Moon Jae In in China later this month, adding to signs that Tokyo and Seoul are seeking to stem a further worsening of ties.

[Trump's U.S.-Japan trade deal wins Diet approval](#)

December 4, 2019, The Asahi Shimbun

Japan's Diet approved a trade deal that was agreed upon by U.S. President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe earlier this year. The deal cutting tariffs between the countries takes effect at the beginning of next year. It cleared the Upper House Wednesday after clearing the more powerful Lower House earlier.

[Japan finally buys remote isle for defense training drills](#)

November 30, 2019, The Asahi Shimbun

The government has finally reached agreement in principle to purchase an uninhabited island in southwestern Japan for use as a training site for U.S. aircraft carrier-based aircraft as well as the Self-Defense Forces.

[Seoul irked by Tokyo report on UNESCO World Heritage site](#)

December 4, 2019, The Asahi Shimbun

South Korea is taking issue with Japan over a report on follow-up measures for a World Heritage site associated with conscripted wartime labourers.

[Abe mulls Middle East trip in January to explain SDF dispatch](#)

December 6, 2019, Japan Today

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe may go to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in mid-January as part of his planned trip to the Middle East. The visit is intended to explain Japan's plans to send its defense forces to the region, government sources said.

[Afghans hold candlelight vigil for slain Japanese doctor](#)

December 6, 2019, Japan Today

Afghans, shocked at the killing of a beloved Japanese physician who was gunned down along with five Afghans in a roadside shooting the previous day, held a candlelight vigil in Kabul.

[Cabinet approves ¥26 trillion stimulus package to prop up slowing Japanese economy](#)

December 5, 2019, The Japan Times

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Cabinet approved an economic stimulus package totaling ¥26 trillion (\$239 billion), to support a slowing domestic economy in the face of flagging global growth and the potential impact of the recent tax hike.

Korea

[U.S. 'Never Abandoned Military Option' Against N.Korea](#)

December 6, 2019, The Chosun Ilbo

A senior Pentagon official said the U.S. had never taken the military option off the table when dealing with North Korea. Heino Klinck, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for East Asia, made the remarks at a forum hosted by the Korea-U.S. Alliance Foundation and the Heritage Foundation in Washington.

[Seoul says US, N. Korea appear to remain apart in nuclear negotiations](#)

December 6, 2019, The Korea Herald

The United States and North Korea appear to remain apart in their nuclear negotiations, Seoul's unification ministry said, following a senior North Korean official's warning that Pyongyang could resume insults against US President Donald Trump.

[Defense cost-sharing talks fail to yield concrete result amid US demand for hefty rise: Seoul negotiator](#)

December 6, 2019, The Korea Herald

South Korea's top negotiator in defense cost-sharing talks with the United States has said the allies have failed to produce a concrete result in this week's negotiations as Washington's demand for a sharp increase in Seoul's share remains unchanged.

[North Korea calls Abe 'most stupid man' for mistaking projectiles from super-large launcher for ballistic missiles](#)

November 30, 2019, The Korea Times

North Korea fired shots at Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, for mistaking Pyongyang's recent testing of a super-large multiple launch rocket system for a ballistic missile launch.

[Gov't under fire for standing idle over deportation of NK defectors in Vietnam](#)

December 1, 2019, The Korea Times

The government is facing mounting criticism for doing nothing about 10 North Korean defectors who were apprehended in Vietnam and immediately deported to China. A human rights group said it had asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the local Korean embassy, for help but had received no assistance.

[North Korea warns US against meeting on its human rights](#)

December 5, The Korea Times

North Korea warned Wednesday that tensions on the Korean peninsula will increase and the situation "take a turn for the worse again" if the United States goes ahead with a U.N. Security Council meeting on the country's human rights situation.

[North Korea's missile capability: how far it has come and its implications in denuclearization talks](#)

December 2, 2019, The Korea Times

North Korea's recent test of its super-large multiple rocket launcher has not only proved the weapon system's improved "volley-firing" capabilities but also showed that North Korea's weapons development programs have proceeded steadily for the past two years, experts said.

Southeast Asia

[India-ASEAN FTA review: Further liberalisation of trade on agenda](#)

November 29, 2019, Business Standard

The proposed scope of the review of the free trade agreement between India and ASEAN could include issues like customs procedures, further liberalisation of trade in goods and exchange of data, Parliament was informed.

[9th ASEAN Marine Forum opens in Da Nang](#)

December 5, 2019, Nhan Dan

The 9th ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF-9) officially opened in the central city of Da Nang on December 5, with the participation of over 50 representatives from all 10 ASEAN member countries and the ASEAN Secretariat.

[Japan promises ASEAN nations \\$3bn in development funding](#)

December 2, 2019, Bangkok Post

Japan has promised US\$3 billion in investment and loans to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to boost development in the fast-growing region, Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said.

[Southeast Asian corridor eyes business opportunities with Delhi via Bay of Bengal](#)

December 5, 2019, The Economic Times

India's decision to stay out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) may increase Southeast Asia's dependence on China, but a recently opened corridor between Thailand and Myanmar could ease those concerns by bringing new business opportunities for five ASEAN countries and India.

[Suu Kyi's loyalists rally for Myanmar leader before genocide trial](#)

December 2, 2019, The Japan Times

As Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi prepares to travel to the Netherlands to fight charges of genocide against her country at the International Court of Justice, her supporters have embarked on an impassioned publicity campaign.

[Is This Central Asia's ASEAN Moment?](#)

December 5, 2019, The Diplomat

Hats off to President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan, First President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, President Emomali Rahmon of Tajikistan, President

Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov of Turkmenistan, and President Sooronbay Jeenbekov of the Kyrgyz Republic.

[ASEAN fights to stay neutral in the US–China contest](#)

December 3, 2019, East Asia forum

Rising US–China tensions go beyond trade and involve a broad range of issues including strategy, security and values. It's pertinent to also look at the choices that ASEAN and others are facing in the context of this great power contest, including decisions on economic development and technology.

[A New Perspective: How do ASEAN Economies Stand Against China's Regions?](#)

December 2, 2019, ASEAN Briefing

The staggering numbers of China's GDP have often been compared with other countries. Statements such as the three Californias of China (Guangdong, Shandong, and Zhejiang) or how Shanghai's GDP equals that of Finland has surprised many.

[US Should Bounce Back From Its ASEAN 2019 Letdown – OpEd](#)

December 6, 2019, Eurasia Review

President Donald Trump's absence from the recently concluded East Asia Summit in Bangkok represents another missed diplomatic opportunity to engage one of the world's most vibrant and dynamic regions. At a time of increasing great-power competition, concern about apparent US retreat from multilateralism, doubts about its security commitments, and worries about its transactionalism, Trump's presence could have sent a message itself.

Central & West Asia

Central Asia

[Report: Tajikistan to yield share in aluminum plant to China](#)

December 05, 2019, Eurasianet

Tajikistan is reportedly on the cusp of selling a stake in its main industrial concern to a Chinese company, thereby relinquishing yet more assets in exchange for much needed cash injections. Beijing's former ambassador to Tajikistan, Yue Bin, said that the acquisition would be executed in return for the Chinese company investing \$545 million into the Talco aluminum producer.

[Is new Russia-China gas pipeline a threat to Turkmenistan?](#)

December 04, 2019, Eurasianet

By 2024, Russia's Power of Siberia pipeline is expected to deliver 38 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas to China annually. This triumph for Moscow will be greeted warily in Turkmenistan, which has dominated deliveries of gas to China since the first arm of the Central Asia-China gas pipeline was completed in 2009. Turkmenistan's gas exports to China rose from just under 4 bcm in 2010 to over 33 bcm last year, making it China's single-largest source of natural gas and accounting for 27% of China's total gas imports.

[Ukraine To Issue Diplomatic Response Over Kazakh President's Denial Of Crimea's Annexation](#)

December 05, 2019, RFE/RL

Ukraine has voiced concern over Kazakh President President Qasym-Zhomart Toqaev's description of Russia's takeover of Crimea, when he said it wasn't an annexation. In an interview with Deutsche Welle, Toqaev said the "accession" of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014 to Russia wasn't an annexation.

[Kazakhstan's third peacekeeping unit starts mission in Lebanon](#)

December 04, 2019, The Astana Times

The third consolidated unit of Kazakh peacekeeping forces started its operations November 27 as part of the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon. The company consists of 120 military personnel from regional commands and the country's Air Assault Forces. The Kazakh peacekeeping unit, together with an Indian battalion, will patrol 16 kilometres of the Lebanese-Israeli border, the Blue Line border demarcation between the countries.

[Indian observers to monitor Uzbekistan parliamentary election on December 22](#)

December 01, 2019, WION

Twelve Indian observers, including from the Chief Election Commissioner's office, will monitor the Uzbekistan polls scheduled to be held later this month. Five political parties will participate in the parliamentary elections and will compete to get seats in the 150-seat Legislative Assembly.

[Kyrgyzstan Eyes Oil Imports from Iran](#)

December 03, 2019, IFP News

The 12th meeting of the Joint Commission of Economic Cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kyrgyz Republic was held in Tehran on December 03. Minister of Transport and Roads of the Kyrgyz Republic has voiced his country's willingness to import oil from Iran and export foodstuffs to the Islamic Republic.

West Asia

[Egypt proposes 5-year ceasefire between Hamas and Israel - report](#)

December 4, 2019, The Jerusalem Post

Senior officials from the al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's military wing, and the Islamic Jihad, are taking part in Egypt's strategic talks, which include offers of a five-year ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, Palestinian newspaper Al-Quds reported on Wednesday.

[No Plans to Leave Iraq, US Defense Official Says](#)

December 5, 2019, US Department of Defence Website

The U.S. military presence in Iraq is predicated on permission to be there from the Iraqi government, and U.S. forces will remain so long as the Iraqi government agrees, the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy said.

[Iraq, Other Countries Support Extra OPEC Cuts](#)

December 3, 2019, The Wall Street Journal

Iraq and some other oil-exporting nations will support deeper production cuts from the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies as the cartel attempts to shore up sagging oil prices.

[U.S. says Iran may have killed more than 1,000 in recent protests](#)

December 5, 2019, Reuters

Iranian security forces may have killed more than 1,000 people since protests over gasoline price hikes began in mid-November, U.S. Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook said on Thursday, adding that many thousands were also wounded in the unrest.

[US considers sending thousands more troops to Middle East to deter Iran](#)

December 5, 2019, CNN International

The Pentagon is considering sending thousands of more troops to the Middle East as part of an effort to beef up air defense capabilities in the face of Iranian moves that include its recent transfer of short-range missiles into Iraq, CNN has learned from multiple defense officials.

[European powers blast Iran for working on nuclear-capable missiles](#)

December 5, 2019, Israel Hayom

European powers on Wednesday filed a grievance with the UN over what they said was a blatant Iranian violation of the 2015 nuclear deal. In a letter to UN Secretary General António Guterres, France, Germany and the United Kingdom said that "Iran's development of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles" goes against a UN Security Council resolution calling on Tehran not to undertake any activity related to such missiles.

[Iran, China reviewing 25-year strategic relations document](#)

December 3, 2019, Tehran Times

Mohammad Baqeri, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, announced on Tuesday that Tehran and Beijing are reviewing an important document which will guarantee joint strategic cooperation for the next 25 years.

[IRGC commander warns Iran has missiles aimed at 21 US bases](#)

December 2, 2019, AMN Al-Masdar News

The top adviser to the Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), General Allahnoor Noorollahi, warned on Monday that Iran has missiles aimed 21 U.S. bases in the Middle East.

[PM Netanyahu: Israel has 'full right' to annex strategic Jordan Valley](#)

December 5, 2019, Associated Press

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday that Israel has the "full right" to annex the Jordan Valley if it chose to, even as the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court warned the country against taking the bold step. Netanyahu said his proposal to annex the strategic part of the occupied West Bank was discussed during a late-night meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

[Kuwait to invest up to \\$1b in Saudi Aramco IPO](#)

December 3, 2019, Gulf News

Kuwait's government will invest as much as \$1 billion (Dh3.67 billion) in the initial public offering of Saudi Aramco as the kingdom asks regional allies to bolster the record share sale, according to people familiar with the matter.

[Oman Oil plans IPO in 2020: oil minister](#)

December 4, 2019, Arab News

State-owned Oman Oil Co. expects to list between 20 percent and 25 percent of its shares in an initial public offering (IPO) by the end of next year, Oman's Oil Minister Mohammed Al-Rumhi said on Wednesday.

[US to restart talks with Taliban in Qatar](#)

December 5, 2019, AFP

The US negotiator on Afghanistan would shortly resume talks with the Taliban and seek efforts toward a ceasefire, officials said on Wednesday, three months after President Donald Trump abruptly halted diplomatic efforts that could end America's longest war.

[Qatar, Saudi edge towards diplomatic thaw despite hurdles](#)

December 4, 2019, France 24

The Saudi monarch's personal invitation to Qatar's emir to take part in a Gulf summit in Riyadh next week is the latest sign of a highly anticipated thaw in a damaging two-year row.

[Saudi Aramco raises \\$25.6bn in world's biggest share sale](#)

December 5, 2019, BBC News

State-owned oil giant Saudi Aramco has raised a record \$25.6bn (£19.4bn) in its initial public offering in Riyadh. The share sale was the biggest to date, surpassing that of China's Alibaba which raised \$25bn in 2014 in New York.

[Saudi Arabia to grant nationality to number of professionals](#)

December 5, 2019, Gulf News

Saudi King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz had issued a decree granting Saudi nationality to brilliant foreign professionals in a step aimed at attracting bright minds from around the world as the kingdom seeks to diversify its economy, Saudi news portal Sabq reported Thursday.

[Turkey-Greece Tensions Escalate Over Ankara's Mediterranean Ambitions](#)

December 4, 2019, Voice of America

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis met Wednesday in an effort to defuse rising tensions over disputed territorial waters in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. The meeting on the sideline of the London NATO summit comes amid Turkish-Greek tensions over territorial disputes about the Mediterranean.

United States

United States

[Democrats say Trump impeachment charges must come swiftly](#)

December 6, 2019, Associated Press

House Democrats moved aggressively to draw up formal articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump on Thursday, with Speaker Nancy Pelosi saying he “leaves us no choice” but to act swiftly because he’s likely to corrupt the system again unless removed before next year’s election.

[Explainer: How impeachment works and why Trump is unlikely to be removed](#)

December 5, 2019, Reuters

U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Thursday instructed the House Judiciary Committee to draft articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump for pressuring Ukraine to investigate a political rival.

What happens next and why Trump is unlikely to be removed from office are both explained in this article.

[Trump aims for role of NATO statesman but mars unity message](#)

December 5, 2019, Associated Press

Aiming to play the role of global statesman as the impeachment drama was unfolding in Washington, President Donald Trump instead shattered NATO’s professed message of unity at its 70th anniversary celebration in England and put his personal and policy differences with alliance members on stark display.

[North Korea Threatens to Resume Calling Trump a 'Dotard'](#)

December 5, 2019, Time

North Korea threatened Thursday to resume insults of U.S. President Donald Trump and consider him a “dotard” if he keeps using provocative language, such as referring to its leader as “rocket man.”

[Trump asks Supreme Court to hear arguments in fight with Congress over his financial records](#)

December 5, 2019, CNBC

Attorneys for President Donald Trump asked the Supreme Court to hear arguments in a case over whether his long-time accounting firm will be required

to turn over his financial records to Congress, Trump attorney Jay Sekulow said Thursday.

[Trump's trade challenge: Closing China and Mexico-Canada deals by the end of December](#)

December 5, 2019, CNN

President Donald Trump is approaching the end of another year without closing on either of the two big trade priorities he campaigned on in 2016 -- a comprehensive deal with China and a renegotiated North American Free Trade Agreement.

[Russia-China pipeline shows growing alliance in reaction to US foreign policy](#)

December 5, 2019, PRI

This pipeline really can't be understood without taking into consideration US President Donald Trump's foreign policy and what it's done over the past few years to drive China and Russia's relations and bringing them much closer together.

[U.S. Uighur bill's threat to surveillance economy puts China on offensive](#)

December 6, 2019, Reuters

China reacted angrily to President Donald Trump's approval of legislation supporting Hong Kong protesters last month, but movement on another congressional bill, backing Uighur Muslims in China's northwest, has cut even closer to the bone and could trigger reprisals and hurt efforts to resolve the U.S.-China trade war.

[Biden says he would consider Harris for vice presidential slot](#)

December 5, 2019, Reuters

A day after U.S. Senator Kamala Harris ended her 2020 presidential bid, former Vice President Joe Biden, a leading contender for the Democratic nomination, said on Wednesday he would consider her as a potential running mate.

[Trump calls Trudeau 'two-faced' as palace gossip goes viral](#)

December 4, 2019, Associated Press

NATO leaders professed unity on Wednesday at a summit near London — but a spat over off-the-cuff chit chat at a royal reception rattled their show of solidarity.

Europe & Russia

Europe

[NATO downplays divisions as infighting roils alliance](#)

December 4, 2019, Associated Press

NATO leaders sought Wednesday to paper over differences like the military alliance's future priorities but insisted they would respond as one in the event of an attack on any of the 29 member countries.

[A brief look at the NATO summit declaration](#)

December 4, 2019, Associated Press

NATO leaders sought on Wednesday, issuing a communique after a short summit near London underlining their commitment to defend each other in times of trouble.

[NATO declares space an 'operational domain'](#)

December 4, 2019, Al Jazeera

The 29 NATO heads of state on Wednesday jointly declared space a "domain of operations" during a summit in London that marked the security alliance's 70th anniversary.

[Brexit is one of most spectacular mistakes in EU history, says Tusk](#)

December 5, 2019, The Guardian

Brexit has been "one of the most spectacular mistakes" in the history of the EU and followed a campaign marked by "an unprecedented readiness to lie", Donald Tusk has said.

[Major European Investors Urge EU to Enshrine Climate Goal in Law](#)

December 5, 2019, The New York Times

European investors representing over six trillion euros in assets are calling on European Union governments to speed up efforts to enshrine the EU's 2050 climate neutrality goal in law.

[The U.K. General Election Will Transform the Country Whoever Wins. Here's What to Know](#)

December 5, 2019, Time

In less than a week, Britain will hold its third general election since 2015 and the welfare state, national security and even Scottish independence are all high on the agenda.

[Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis fraud investigation reopened](#)

December 4, 2019, Deutsche Welle

The fraud investigation into Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis was reopened after the prosecutor called the decision to close the previous investigation "illegal and premature." Babis has denied any wrongdoing.

[Strikes Against Macron's Pension Plans Shut Down Much of France](#)

December 5, 2019, The New York Times

A protest against changes to France's pension system brought parts of the country to a grinding halt on Thursday, with nationwide strikes shutting down transportation and leaving schools and hospitals unstaffed and basic government services unmet.

[Europe Accuses Iran of Missile Violations, and U.S. Says 1,000 Killed in Protests](#)

December 5, 2019, The New York Times

In a rare rebuke of Iran after more than a year of trying to bridge the divisions between Washington and Tehran, three European powers accused Iran of testing ballistic missiles intended to avoid missile defences in violation of United Nations resolutions that urge Iran not to develop "nuclear capable" systems.

[German car industry expects more job cuts in 2020](#)

December 4, 2019, Reuters

Germany's main automobile industry body said on Wednesday it expects global car sales to fall by 5% this year, the steepest drop since the financial crisis, and warned of more job cuts in 2020 as a result.

[Germany's SPD backs cautious new approach that could save Merkel government](#)

December 5, 2019, Reuters

The executive board of Germany's Social Democrats (SPD) on Thursday unanimously agreed to have delegates vote on a motion that avoids setting tough conditions on staying in Chancellor Angela Merkel's government, officials said.

Russia

[NATO's attack on Kaliningrad could prompt Russia's nuclear strike](#)

December 3, 2019, RT

An attack by NATO on Russia's westernmost exclave Kaliningrad – a scenario that's been speculated about in the media lately – would lead to a nuclear apocalypse and affect even countries not involved in a hypothetical conflict.

[Expelled Russian Diplomats Linked to Military Intelligence – German Media](#)

December 5, 2019, The Moscow Times

Two Russian diplomats that Germany expelled over the assassination of a Chechen rebel in Berlin worked for the GRU military intelligence agency, Germany's Süddeutsche Zeitung daily reported.

[What the New EU Leadership Should Do About Russia](#)

December 5, 2019, The Moscow Times

Macron is right about the need to see relations with Russia in the context of a changing international system. At the same time, there must be a sober assessment of what is and is not possible between the EU and Russia.

[Trump promises to resolve issue of non-issuance of US visas to Russian delegates](#)

December 6, 2019, TASS

US President Donald Trump has promised to resolve the situation around non-issuance of US visas to Russia's UN delegates.

[Russian Energy Ministry frecasts oil production in Russia in 2019 at 556-560 mln tonnes](#)

December 6, 2019, Tass

According to preliminary estimates, oil production in Russia in 2019 will surpass last year's rates will reach 556-560 million tonnes, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said.

[US introduces cybersecurity-related sanctions against Russian nationals, companies](#)

December 5, 2019, Tass

The United States introduced sanctions against Russian nationals Maxim Yakubets and Igor Turashev charged by Washington with computer software

fraud and certain other individuals and legal entities allegedly linked to the Evil Corp group of hackers, the US Treasury Department said.

[Russia to increase gas production to 740 million cubic meters in 2019](#)

December 6, 2019, Tass

Russia will increase gas extraction by 2% to 740 billion cubic meters in 2019, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said.

[Zelensky seeks to restore relations with Russia, peace in Ukraine – PM Medvedev](#)

December 5, 2019, Tass

Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky wants to restore relations with Russia and peace in his country, but the question is whether this effort will be a success, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said in an interview with Russian TV channels.

[Russia sees no sense in modernizing Vienna Document amid containment policy – Lavrov](#)

December 5, 2019, Tass

The top diplomat commended the OSCE's thorough work on a project for advancing energy cooperation and digital innovations.

[Investment in Arctic expected to reach \\$235 bln in 15 years, says ministry](#)

Dec 5, 2019, Tass

The Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East and Arctic expects around 15 trillion rubles (\$235 bln) to be invested in the Arctic within the next 15 years due to subsidies envisioned by the development strategy for Russia's Arctic zone through 2035, Deputy Minister Alexander Krutikov said.

Africa & Latin America

Latin America

[Colombia is having its largest wave of protests in recent decades. Why?](#)

December 5, 2019, The Washington Post

Colombians have joined others in Latin America by taking to the streets to protest their government. Since Nov. 21, hundreds of thousands of people from all backgrounds have been marching in large and small cities and even in rural areas. Colombia hasn't seen such protests in several decades.

[Demonstrations Across South America](#)

December 5, 2019, WPR

For the third time in two weeks, Colombians turned out Wednesday for a national strike, demanding the government of President Ivan Duque accept a wide-ranging list of popular demands.

[U.S. oil sanctions are hurting Venezuelans. Time for a new approach to pressure Maduro](#)

December 5, 2019, The Washington Post

Venezuela is living through the deepest economic and humanitarian crisis in our hemisphere in more than a century. This catastrophe was triggered by the mismanagement and corruption of Venezuelan dictator Nicolás Maduro and his predecessor, Hugo Chávez.

[U.N., lender CAF seek \\$350 million loan for government of Venezuela's Maduro](#)

December 5, 2019, Reuters

Latin American lender CAF and the United Nations are seeking to provide financing to the government of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to improve electricity supply in the crisis-stricken nation that is suffering chronic blackouts.

[Trump renews tariff threat on Brazil and Argentina](#)

December 2, 2019, CNN

President Donald Trump announced Monday that the US will "restore" steel and aluminum tariffs on Brazil and Argentina, citing a "massive devaluation of their currencies."

[The Burning Quest to Revive a Nationalist Vision in Brazil's Amazon](#)

December 5, 2019, NACLA

But rural landholders in the south of the Amazonian state of Pará, along the BR-163 highway, are still not satisfied. Amazon fires were particularly rampant in this area on August 10, 2019, spiking to 124 fires in the vicinity of Novo Progresso, compared to only six fires on the same date last year. The far northern states of Roraima, Amazonas, and Rondônia also experienced out of control fires later that month. What has happened along the BR-163 is indicative of broader deforestation trends amid a political climate of impunity for land-related crimes and resentment against environmental protections.

[Brazil at risk of losing its UN vote due to debt](#)

December 5, 2019, New Europe

Brazil is in danger of losing its vote at the United Nations if it does not pay some of its debt of \$400 million by the end of the year, Brazilian officials said.

[US, Mexico in Meetings to Address Deadly Drug Cartel Threat](#)

December 5, 2019, The Epoch Times

The threat of deadly Mexican drug cartels was addressed in Dec. 5 meetings between Mexico's government officials and U.S. Attorney General William Barr, with a focus on bilateral cooperation, according to Mexico's government.

Africa

[Nigeria's parliament passes record budget for 2020](#)

December 6, 2019, Al Jazeera

Nigeria's parliament passed a record 10.59 trillion naira (\$35bn) budget for 2020, paving the way for the country's likely return to the international debt market next year as it struggles to shake off the impact of a recession.

[Pirates attack tanker off Nigeria coast, take 19 crew hostage](#)

December 5, 2019, Al Jazeera

Pirates have kidnapped 18 Indian and 1 Turkish crew members from a Greek-owned crude oil tanker off Nigeria, the ship's owner and managers said in a statement.

[Shell To Challenge Damages Award Made In Nigeria After 1969 Oil Spill](#)

December 5, 2019, Morning Star

Royal Dutch Shell PLC is mounting an appeal after a judge in Nigeria made a GBP33 million damages award following an oil pipeline rupture half a century ago.

[Dozens dead as migrant boat sinks off Mauritania coast: UN](#)

December 6, 2019, Al Jazeera

At least 62 people, including children, were killed after a boat carrying dozens of migrants capsized in the Atlantic Ocean off the West African nation of Mauritania, the UN's migration agency said.

[Armed attack in Burundi aggravates tensions with Rwanda](#)

December 5, 2019, Yahoo News

A deadly attack on the Burundi army last month near the Rwanda border has sent tensions soaring between the neighbours, with Bujumbura directly accusing Kigali of armed aggression.

[Tanzania, Burundi and DR Congo to be connected by SGR: minister](#)

December 4, 2019, Xinhua Net

Tanzania, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on Tuesday entered into an agreement to construct a standard gauge railway connecting the three countries in a move aimed at easing transport.

[East African states devastated by floods](#)

December 5, 2019, Al Jazeera

Nearly 300 people have been killed in floods across East Africa and millions of others have been affected. In South Sudan, the floods are taking a toll on refugees who returned after years of war and were just beginning to rebuild their lives.

[306 Rwandan rebels surrender in DR Congo](#)

December 6, 2019, Andolou Agency

Hundreds of members of a Rwandan rebel group have surrendered to the Congolese army in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a military spokesman said.

[US and Sudan to appoint ambassadors, ending a 23-year diplomatic absence](#)

December 4, 2019, The National

Sudan and the United States agreed to upgrade their diplomatic relations by appointing ambassadors for the first time in 23 years, as America seeks to support Khartoum's transition to democratic rule.



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