



Delhi Policy Group

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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.

DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

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South Asia

India

[India has engaged with the world on CAA, clarified MEA](#)

January 03, 2020, India Today

Contrary to reports that emerged about India's lack of engagement with the world on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) clarified that multiple methods have been employed to reach out to countries around the globe and inform them why the Narendra Modi government amended the law.

[Bipin Rawat appointed India's first tri-services chief](#)

December 31, 2019, Live Mint

Bipin Rawat, who retired as the Army Chief on December 31, has been appointed as the first chief of defence staff (CDS), an official statement said. It said the appointment was with effect from Tuesday until further orders. Ordinarily CDS serve upto 65 years.

[Appointment of CDS will boost defence ties: US](#)

January 1, 2019, Tribune India

The US has congratulated General Bipin Rawat on his appointment as India's first Chief of Defence Staff, saying this will help "catalyse" greater defence cooperation between the two countries.

[CDS General Rawat seeks plan for air defence command](#)

January 3, 2019, The Times of India

Kick-starting the long overdue process for integration among the Army, Navy and IAF, chief of defence staff General Bipin Rawat has directed his tri- Service integrated defence staff(IDS) to prepare a plan for the creation of an Air Defence Command (ADC) as well as " common logistics support pools" for the armed forces.

[CDS appointment step towards seamless coordination in higher defence management](#)

December 31, 2019, The Indian Express

The appointment of General Bipin Rawat, the current Chief of Army Staff, as India's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) comes quick on the heels of the historic

decision taken by India's Cabinet Committee on Security on December 24 on the appointment of a CDS, bringing to fruition a matter that has been hanging fire for close to two decades.

[On New Year, PM Modi speaks to leaders of neighbouring countries](#)

January 1, 2019, The Times of India

On the occasion of the New Year, PM Narendra Modi had telephonic conversation with the leaders of the neighbouring countries emphasizing India's commitment to the ' Neighborhood First' policy.

[Amid chill, India and Pakistan exchange customary list of prisoners, N-facilities](#)

January 2, 2019, The Times of India

India and Pakistan exchanged through diplomatic channels the customary list of nuclear installations and facilities covered under the agreement on prohibition of attack against nuclear installations between India and Pakistan.

[Indian Navy planning to build six nuclear attack submarines: Navy to Parliamentary panel](#)

December 30, 2019, Economic Times

The Indian Navy had planned to build six nuclear attack submarines along with the Arihant Class SSBNs which are nuclear-powered submarines equipped with nuclear missiles. The nuclear attack submarines are also planned to be built indigenously in partnership with private sector industries.

[Gen Mukund Naravane takes charge as India's 28th Army chief](#)

December 31, 2019, The Hindu

Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane on Tuesday took over as the 28th Chief of Army Staff, helming the 1.3 million-strong force at a time India faces evolving security challenges such as cross-border terrorism and an assertive Chinese military along the border.

[India capable of building everything from aircraft to aircraft carrier: PM Modi at DRDO](#)

January 02, 2020, India Today

Speaking at the launch of DRDO in Bengaluru, PM Narendra Modi said that as the Prime Minister of the country, I want to say that government is ready to support the scientists and innovators of the country at every step.

[Russia getting close to China one joint military exercise at a time. India must worry](#)

January 3, 2019, The Print

The rapidly expanding Russia-China military relations will significantly impact India. The militaries of the two countries not only exercise together regularly, especially in the maritime domain, but are also inviting other countries to it.

[India allows Huawei to participate in 5G trials](#)

December 31, 2019, Economic Times

"5G trials will be done with all vendors and operators," telecom minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told reporters on Monday. "We have taken an in-principle decision to give 5G spectrum for trials." On being asked specifically about Huawei, Prasad said that at this stage, all vendors are invited.

[India may surpass Germany to become fourth-largest economy in 2026: Report](#)

December 30, 2019, Economic Times

India is expected to overtake Germany to become fourth-largest economy in 2026 and Japan to become third largest in 2034, according to a recent report by the UK-based Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR). It further said India is also set to reach a gross domestic product (GDP) of USD 5 trillion by 2026, 2 years later than the government's target.

[Domestic political climate affects external relations. India must recognise this urgently](#)

December 31, 2019, The Indian Express

Some in Delhi might scoff at the notion of recognising external concerns in the conduct of India's domestic politics. To be sure, the theory is that all states are sovereign and free to do what they want at home and free to conduct foreign policies as they like.

[Running to stand still: There were many positives to Indian diplomacy this year, even if it closes on a dismal note](#)

December 30, 2019, The Times of India

The year opened with Pulwama, Balakot and Masood Azhar's overdue terror listing, which segued neatly into Narendra Modi's security-heavy campaign that resulted in an unprecedented victory at the hustings. Since then, Modi checked off boxes on a political agenda that began with negating Article 370 and

reorganising Jammu & Kashmir into two union territories, and ending with the alphabet cocktail CAA-NRC-NPR.

Pakistan

[TTP commander Saifullah Mehsud killed in Afghanistan](#)

December 31, 2019, The Nation

Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) commander Qari Saifullah Mehsud has been shot dead by gunmen in Afghanistan, the group confirmed. He was killed outside the Guloon camp in Khost province.

[Navy seminar lays focus on cyber, space warfare](#)

December 30, 2019, The Nation

Pakistan Navy Operational Commands Seminar-2019 and 3rd Pakistan Navy Industrial Seminar were held at Karachi. During Operational Commands Seminar-2019, latest developments in the realms of cyber and space warfare vis-à-vis regional security situation were thoroughly analysed by the panels participating in the seminar.

[Trade volume surged at major border port between Pakistan, China](#)

December 29, 2019, The Nation

Trade volume surged this year at a major border port between China and Pakistan. Cargo import and export reached 66,600 tonnes in the first 11 months at Khunjerab Pass in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, up 46.8 percent from the same period last year. Trade volume increased by 1.4 times to 5.99 billion yuan (around 856.3 million U.S. dollars) during the same period.

[Islamabad, Kabul resume visa services after 3 months](#)

December 29, 2019, The Nation

Pakistan and Afghanistan announced the mutual resumption of visa services after a three-month diplomatic row over the alleged harassment of diplomats. Afghan authorities also announced the reopening of its Peshawar consulate after nearly three months closure.

[Al-Qaeda's media cell busted in Gujranwala](#)

December 28, 2019, The Nation

Five terrorists running Al-Qaeda's media cell have been arrested from Gujranwala in a joint operation conducted by the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) and an intelligence agency.

[Navy test-fires anti-ship missiles from sea, air](#)

December 28, 2019, The Nation

Pakistan Navy demonstrated its combat readiness through live firing of missiles from surface, subsurface and air platforms in North Arabian Sea. The anti-ship missiles were launched from Pakistan Navy destroyer and aircraft. Long range land attack missiles were fired from submarine and fast attack craft (missile). Similarly, Air Defence Missile was launched at Makran coast to reaffirm Pakistan Navy's air defence capabilities

[Two houses of parliament convened on 24-hour notice](#)

January 1, 2020, Dawn

The Pakistan government convened both houses of parliament to meet on a 24-hour notice. The government said the decision had been taken to take the legislature into confidence over recent important developments including amendment in Pakistan Army act accordance with the decision to extend the tenure of Gen Bajwa as COAS.

[UAE extends \\$200m aid to Pakistan for economic projects](#)

January 2, 2020, The Express Tribune

Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan undertook a daylong visit to Islamabad on January 2 and held wide-ranging talks with Prime Minister Imran Khan, focusing on bilateral, regional and international issues. At the conclusion of the visit, according to the UAE state news agency, WAM, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed instructed the Khalifa Fund for Enterprise Development to allocate \$200 million to support the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) projects in Pakistan.

Afghanistan

[US extends help with India on Chabahar Port](#)

December 27, 2019, Tolo News

The United States has given a written assurance to India that will help facilitate global banks to fund the purchase of equipment worth \$85 million to be established at Chabahar Port in Iran. In November 2018, US granted a waiver to the port from the sanctions it has imposed on the Persian Gulf nation.

[Taliban kill 23 Afghan soldiers in New Year attacks](#)

January 1, 2020, The New Arab

At least 23 Afghan security forces were killed in a series of Taliban attacks across the country, despite winter snowfall that usually leads to a lull in violence. The assaults targeted vulnerable checkpoints in at least three northern provinces.

[Another Pakistani consultant 'picked up' in Kabul: embassy](#)

January 2, 2020, Daily Times

Afghan security officials have detained another Pakistani professional in Kabul. Saeedullah was "picked up by the National Directorate of Security (NDS)" at a checkpoint in Kabul. This is third case of abduction of Pakistani professionals during last couple of months.

Bangladesh

[Bangladesh restores telecom services along India border](#)

January 01, 2020, Scroll

The Bangladesh government on January 01 reversed its decision to shut down mobile services along the border with India, two days after ordering telecom operators to do so citing security concerns. Officials had in a statement released late on December 31 said mobile network coverage was suspended for a one-kilometre-wide band along the border with India until further notice "for the sake of the country's security in the current circumstances".

[Army to be modernised further: PM](#)

December 30, 2019, The Daily Star

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government is working to transform Bangladesh Army into a time-befitting, technologically well-equipped and modern force. She said this while addressing a programme as chief guest. The

premier said that the army should always be well-trained and equipped with modern technologies. In addition, she said, her government has ensured inclusion of women in the force.

[PM Hasina opens Dhaka International Trade Fair](#)

January 01, 2020, Bd News

While setting off the month-long fair at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka, the Prime Minister called for efforts to expand the export market and introduce new products to increase the export income. Putting emphasis on the development of the ICT sector, Hasina said the production, use and export of digital devices will contribute to Bangladesh's economy.

[Myanmar has not denied Rohingya atrocities: B'desh FM](#)

January 2020, Outlook

Bangladesh was making every diplomatic effort to send the Rohingya refugees back to Myanmar, which has "not denied charges of atrocities" against the Muslim minority in the world court, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said here.

Nepal

[Nepal-China Transit Protocol to come into effect from Feb](#)

January 02, 2020, Morung Express

Ten months after signing the Protocol on Implementing the Agreement on Transit and Transportation between Nepal and China, Beijing has officially notified Kathmandu that it has completed all domestic legal procedures which means that it would come into effect from February 1. The transit protocol allows Nepal access to seven Chinese sea and land ports for third-country trade. So far, all of Nepal's third-country trade takes place via India.

[US envoy appreciates Nepal's action to shut down North Korean businesses](#)

December 31, 2019, Khabarhub

Posting a tweet on the official twitter account of the US Embassy in Kathmandu, Ambassador Berry lauded the Nepal government's action that led to the closer to all the North Korean businesses in the Himalayan country complying with the UN resolutions.

[Nepal Bans bans vehicles with Indian number plates on Pokhara roads ahead of New Year](#)

December 28, 2019, Business Today

The decision to ban Indian vehicles was taken by Pokhara Tourism Council in consultation with the district administration of Kaski to ease traffic congestion during celebrations, officials said.

[Nepal: Apex Court Orders Govt. to submit historic documents](#)

January 03, 2020, Telegraph Nepal

A single bench of Honorable Justice Hari Fuyal has ordered the Nepal Government to furnish the certified copy of the Sugauli Treaty signed by Nepal and the then East India Company in 1816. The Supreme Court has asked from the government the documents which authenticates Nepal's border, accurate and valid maps of the nation together with the exact area under Nepal's occupation after the signing of the Sugauli Treaty over the Kalapani border issue.

[India's map accurately depicts territory, Nepal boundary not revised: MEA](#)

January 02, 2020, Business Standard

India on January 02 said the new map issued by it in November 2019 accurately depicts its sovereign territory and it has in no manner revised its boundary with Nepal. MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar made the assertion while responding to a question on whether the Kalapani border issue was discussed between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Nepalese Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli.

Bhutan

[President for exploring trade-investment potentials in Bhutan](#)

January 02, 2020, Dhaka Tribune

Bangladeshi President Abdul Hamid has asked newly appointed Bangladesh Ambassador to Bhutan AKM Shahidul Karim to explore trade and investment potentials in Bhutan. Noting that Bangladesh and Bhutan have many potentials to explore, the President suggested the envoy to utilize the potential sectors in the greater interest of the country.

Sri lanka

[Chief of Defence Staff Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne retires](#)

December 31, 2019, News First Lk

Chief of Defence Staff Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne retired from his position on December 31. Admiral Wijegunaratne was instrumental in forming the Sri Lanka Navy's Special Forces element known as the Special Boat Squadron as well as the Marine Squadron.

[Sri Lanka- Army Chief to serve as acting Chief of Defence Staff](#)

December 31, 2019, Colombo Gazette

Army Commander, Lieutenant General Shavendra Silva, has been appointed as acting Chief of Defence Staff, effective from 1 January 2020. This will be in addition to his present office of the Commander of the Army.

[Private Member's Bill to bring Defence Ministry under President](#)

January 01, 2020, Daily FT

A Private Member's Bill to enable the President to hold the Ministry of Defence and any other ministries will be introduced to Parliament by MP Wijeyadasa Rajapakse shortly. The 22nd Amendment to the Constitution has been published in the Gazette ahead of its presentation to the House. The Amendment is intended to give clarity to the allocation of ministries to the President, which has become a grey area under the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. The provision will come as an amendment to Article 43 of the Constitution and states, "The President shall hold the Ministry of Defence and any other ministries."

[Iran calls for improved bilateral relations with Sri Lanka](#)

January 02, 2020, Colombo Gazette

The Iranian Ambassador to Sri Lanka Mohammad Zaeri Amirani called for improved bilateral cooperation and friendship between Iran and Sri Lanka. The Ambassador made these comments when he called on Defence Secretary Maj. Gen. (Retd) Kamal Gunaratne at his office on January 02. During the cordial discussion he praised the Sri Lankan Government's commitment in handling the Police and the Armed Forces to maintain peace in the country.

East & South East Asia

China

[Time to make better global governance world's New Year's resolution](#)

January 2, 2020, Xinhua

As nations across the globe celebrate the arrival of year 2020, it is time to reflect on the past and make New Year's resolutions. And one common task should be how to make this increasingly interconnected world a better place for all.

[Chinese FM to visit five African countries](#)

January 2, 2020, Xinhua

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi will pay official visits to Egypt, Djibouti, Eritrea, Burundi and Zimbabwe from Jan. 7 to 13.

[China-Bangladeshi joint venture constructs mega expressway bypassing Dhaka](#)

December 27, 2019, Xinhua

A Chinese and Bangladeshi joint venture has started construction of a mega expressway bypassing Dhaka.

[China calls for restraint over clash in Kashmir region](#)

December 27, 2019, Xinhua

China called on India and Pakistan to maintain restraint and avoid taking actions that could escalate tensions, a foreign ministry spokesperson said Friday.

[Muslim ethnic minorities not forced to work in Xinjiang](#)

January 2, 2019, Global Times

The New York Times on Monday published an article headlined "Inside China's Push to Turn Muslim Minorities Into an Army of Workers." The article said Muslim ethnic minorities in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region suffer from "forced labor" and the policies are designed to make them "more secular and urbanized like China's Han majority."

[China, US to seek balance, boundaries](#)

January 2, 2019, Global Times

The year 2020 has just begun. What signals will China-US relations release this year? This will likely influence the directions of bilateral relations in the entire 2020s.

[China on track to compete with US in global e-commerce market](#)

January 2, 2019, Global Times

Though American consumers made a record amount of online purchases during this holiday season, US e-commerce retailers continue to operate under great pressure. As online goods are almost three times more likely to be returned than those purchased in stores, US shoppers are forecast to return roughly \$100 billion worth of unwanted goods bought over the holiday, the Financial Times reported.

[India not led astray by US 5G ploy: China Daily editorial](#)

January 2, 2019, China Daily

India doesn't need unsolicited external advice on what it should do to serve its best interests. The country can rely on its own reason and judgment – rather than the unsubstantiated claims of others – when making decisions concerning what is and isn't a national security threat.

[Hong Kong's New Year resolution must be to put an end to violence: China Daily editorial](#)

January 2, 2019, China Daily

The violence on New Year's Day in Hong Kong sent a worrying signal that some radicals and rioters are still intent on taking the city's stability and prosperity hostage.

[Anti-infiltration bill is tool to ensure Tsai's reelection: China Daily editorial](#)

January 2, 2019, China Daily

It should be no surprise that the anti-infiltration bill was passed in Taiwan's legislature on Wednesday since it is dominated by the ruling Democratic Progressive Party.

[US paying price for Middle East policy: China Daily editorial](#)

January 1, 2019, China Daily

Even with the violent assault on the United States embassy compound in Baghdad on Tuesday, for which he threatened Teheran with a "very big price" to pay, and even as the Pentagon acted swiftly to reinforce deployment in the region, US President Donald Trump indicated that the US will exercise restraint.

[Washington reaps rewards of its bad faith: China Daily editorial](#)

January 1, 2019, China Daily

For any stakeholders in the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the latest seven-hour speech delivered by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea top leader Kim Jong-un in Pyongyang on Tuesday contains signals that no side can afford to ignore.

Japan

[Presidential election will define Japan-U.S. ties](#)

December 31, 2019, The Japan Times

With less than a year to go until the U.S. presidential election on Nov. 3, 2020, the world's attention has started to focus on whether President Donald Trump will be reelected for a second term or if one of the 15 Democratic candidates will prevail. The outcome will have profound implications, not only for the United States, but for the entire world, including Japan.

[Abe pledges reforms, successful Olympics in New Year's statement](#)

January 2, 2019, Japan Today

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pledged to promote reforms in Japan, ranging from social security to the Constitution, while expressing his hope to successfully host the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics this summer.

[Abe's foreign policy outlook for 2020](#)

December 30, 2019, The Japan Times

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe closed out 2019 with a flurry of diplomatic activities that tested his ability as Japan's diplomat-in-chief. After he hosted Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, whose visit on Dec. 20-21 marked the first trip to Japan by an Iranian president in 19 years, he traveled to Chengdu to attend the Japan-China-South Korea summit with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and South Korean President Moon Jae-in. During his short visit to Chengdu, Abe also met with Moon as well as Chinese President Xi Jinping.

[Japan firms growing pessimistic about economy amid U.S.-China spat](#)

January 3, 2019, The Japan Times

Major Japanese companies are growing more pessimistic about the economy due to worries over prolonged U.S.-China trade tensions and last year's consumption tax hike, a Kyodo News survey showed.

[Japan faces a diplomatic balancing act in 2020 as it seeks to manage ties with the U.S. and China](#)

January 2, 2019, The Japan Times

Last year was an extremely hectic one for Japanese diplomats. Hundreds of world leaders visited to attend a number of major events, including the Group of 20 Osaka summit in June, an all-Africa development conference in August and ceremonies related to the enthronement of Emperor Naruhito held throughout the year.

[North Korean missiles again flying over Japan 'only a matter of time,' experts say](#)

January 2, 2019, The Japan Times

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's declaration that his country is no longer bound by its self-imposed nuclear and missile moratorium drastically raises the chances of longer-range weapons overflying Japan once again, experts say.

[Tokyo pressed El Salvador to prevent Beijing influence over port](#)

December 31, 2019, Japan Today

The Japanese government prevented a Chinese corporation from getting operating rights at a port in El Salvador to be built with a concessional loan from Tokyo, diplomatic sources said.

[Japan to launch project to boost farm productivity in Myanmar](#)

December 31, 2019, Japan Today

Japan will launch a 390 million yen (\$3.6 million) project in May in Myanmar to boost irrigation and agricultural management as part of efforts to increase productivity and eradicate poverty in the Southeast Asian country.

[Abe to visit Middle East in early January](#)

December 28, 2019, Japan Today

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Friday he plans to visit the Middle East early next month as Japan has decided to send Self-Defense Forces personnel to the region to help secure the safe navigation of commercial ships.

[S Korean court rejects petition to repeal Japan sex slave deal](#)

December 28, 2019, Japan Today

South Korea's Constitutional Court on Friday rejected a petition seeking the repeal of a 2015 deal with Japan settling a bitter dispute over Korean women enslaved for sex by the Japanese military during World War II.

Korea

[North's silence on inter-Korean matters puts Seoul on edge](#)

January 2, 2019, The Korea Herald

While allies paid keen attention to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's warning about a "new strategic weapon," officials in Seoul had one more concern -- the absence of South Korea from Kim's lengthy remarks on the communist state's policy direction.

[North Korea reverts to aggressive nuclear policy](#)

January 1, 2019, The Korea Herald

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un declared the regime will continue to develop its nuclear program and debut a new "strategic weapon" in the near future, if the US does not end its economic sanctions.

[NK leader calls for military, diplomatic preparations](#)

December 31, 2019, The Korea Herald

According to North Korean media, Kim offered a "comprehensive report" on his regime's policies and projects at Monday's session of the plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, and called for preparations to be made.

[President Moon vows more reforms to achieve 'shared prosperity'](#)

January 2, 2019, The Korea Herald

President Moon Jae-in pledged to continue his reform drive to achieve the goal of "shared prosperity," naming prosecution overhaul as one of his top priorities.

[US defense secretary urges North Korean leader to exercise restraint](#)

January 3, 2019, The Korea Times

U. S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper urged North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to exercise "restraint" after the communist nation threatened to reveal a "new strategic weapon" in protest over stalled nuclear talks.

[Korea on track to becoming world's 10th largest economy in 2027: report](#)

January 2, 2019, The Korea Times

Korea is expected to become the world's 10th largest economy in 2027, according to a report by the Centre for Economics and Business Research, a British think tank. It currently ranks 12th.

[S. Korea, US to adjust combined drills for diplomacy with N. Korea: defense ministry](#)

January 2, 2019, The Korea Times

South Korea and the United States will continue to stage their combined exercises in an adjusted manner to support efforts for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, Seoul's defense ministry said

[Kim Jong-un Hints at Scrapping Nuclear Test Moratorium](#)

January 2, 2019, The Chosun Ilbo

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has hinted heavily that he could scrap a moratorium on nuclear weapons as a unilateral year-end deadline for concessions from the U.S. passed.

Southeast Asia

[Indonesia rejects China's claims over South China Sea](#)

January 1, 2019, CAN

Indonesia said it rejected China's claims over a disputed part of the South China Sea as "having no legal basis", after two days earlier protesting to Beijing over the presence of a Chinese coastguard vessel in its territorial waters.

[How Indonesia's South China Sea dispute with Beijing could lead to tough ASEAN stance on code of conduct](#)

January 2, 2019, SCMP

Indonesia's latest protest against Chinese activities in its territorial waters close to the disputed South China Sea was rebuffed by Beijing.

[Indonesia lodges strong protest against China for trespassing, poaching in Natunas](#)

January 1, 2019, The Jakarta Post

The Foreign Ministry has summoned Chinese Ambassador to Indonesia Xiao Qian to lodge a diplomatic protest over China's violation of Indonesia's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) near the Natuna Islands, which are located adjacent to the southernmost tip of the highly disputed South China Sea.

[Third US Senator banned from the Philippines over support of top government critic](#)

January 1, 2020, The Hill

Officials in the Philippines confirmed Thursday that Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) has been banned from entering the country, the third U.S. senator to be banned over support for a critic of the country's government.

[Domestic policy challenges for Singapore in an uncertain external environment](#)

January 3, 2019, East Asia Forum

In 2019, Singapore witnessed a new team of ministers – the fourth generation since political independence in 1965 – actively participate in policymaking and implementation. The People's Action Party's (PAP) approach to political transition ensures a seasoned new team governs the country. The team must tackle a myriad of domestic issues including managing the impact of technological disruption, housing affordability and increased social spending for the ageing population. In addition to its domestic challenges, Singapore also faces an uncertain external environment.

[ASEAN states resist incursions](#)

January 2, 2019, The Australian

If China is to be accepted as part of the Asia-Pacific community, it would be unwise to ignore growing concerns among countries across the region over its expansionism in the South China Sea. ASEAN members such as Malaysia, Indonesia, The Philippines and Vietnam need co-operative working relationships

with Beijing but as Amanda Hodge wrote on Wednesday, they are increasingly at loggerheads with China.

[ASEAN Outlook to solve South China Sea dispute?](#)

January 1, 2019, THE ASEAN POST

There are at least two reasons this article argues that the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific might help the region in navigating and maintaining the peaceful South China

[Myanmar Rohingya: UN condemns human rights abuses](#)

December 28, 2019, BBC

The UN General Assembly has approved a resolution condemning human rights abuses against Muslim Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar.

[Malaysia delays VEP enforcement as many Singapore vehicles still without RFID tag](#)

January 3, 2019, CNA

Back in 2007, Malaysia announced that all foreign-registered vehicles entering the country will need a VEP, which it said was meant to tackle car theft and cloning syndicates and prevent vehicles with outstanding fines from leaving the country.

[New Laos-Vietnam shared border crossings soon](#)

January 3, 2019, The Star Online

Laos and Vietnam are preparing to upgrade two more local crossing points to official border crossings to facilitate international visits between them.

Central & West Asia

Central Asia

[India looks to leverage Chabahar port to boost trade with Central Asia](#)

January 2, 2019, The Hindu Business Line

Diplomats from India, Iran and Afghanistan took stock of the activities at the Chabahar Port in South-Eastern Iran one year after its inauguration in a recent meeting and discussed ways to further enhance connectivity and use the port to expand the India's trade links with Central Asian countries.

[Central Asia: Is Now The Time To Invest In Kazakhstan?](#)

December 30, 2019, Forbes

Global investors tend to group Kazakhstan along with Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), but its market fundamentals are markedly different and they appear to offer some interesting investment opportunities going into 2020.

[China says confident of Central Asia support before Pompeo visit](#)

December 31, 2019, Reuters

Attempts to sow discord over Chinese policies in its Xinjiang region will fail, China's foreign ministry said on Tuesday, ahead of a visit by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to neighbouring central Asia.

[Kazakhstan cancels mandatory registration for foreigners visiting up to 30 days](#)

January 2, 2019, New Europe

Foreigners will be able to stay in Kazakhstan without registration for up to 30 days, the Ministry of Internal Affairs said on 31 December.

[Heads of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan discuss prospects for co-op](#)

January 2, 2019, Azer News

Presidents of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and Shavkat Mirziyoyev exchanged views over the phone about the further development of bilateral relations between the two countries.

[Russia Ratifies Agreement With Tajikistan on Labor Migrants](#)

January 3, 2019, The Diplomat

The agreement attempts to organize the recruitment of Tajik labor migrants who work seasonally in Russia.

West Asia

[U.S. Strike Kills One of Iran's Most Powerful Military Leaders](#)

January 2, 2020, Foreign Policy

General Qassem Suleimani's death could mark the most dramatic escalation of the Middle East conflict since the Iraq War.

[Trump says Iran will be held 'fully responsible' for attack on the US embassy in Iraq](#)

December 31, 2019, CNBC

President Donald Trump on Tuesday blamed Iran for planning an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Iraq and promised to hold Tehran "fully responsible."

[More US troops deployed to the Middle East after Baghdad embassy siege](#)

January 1, 2020, The Guardian

The US defence secretary, Mark Esper, announced that 750 airborne troops would be deployed to the region immediately, with more to follow in the next few days.

[Netanyahu Seeks Immunity From Israeli Corruption Charges](#)

January 1, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asked lawmakers to grant him immunity from prosecution on corruption charges, ahead of an election in March that will decide his personal and political future.

[Greece, Israel, Cyprus, move to build East Med gas pipeline](#)

January 3, 2020, Al Jazeera

The governments of Greece, Israel and Cyprus have signed an agreement to build a pipeline that could supply Europe with 4 percent of its annual gas needs by the middle of the decade.

[Jordan holds solidarity rally with China's Uyghurs](#)

January 2, 2020, Middle East Monitor

Dozens of Jordanians on Tuesday participated in a protests against China's treatment of Uyghur Muslim in China's Xinjiang province. The demonstration

was organised by the Islamic Action Front, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, in front of the Chinese embassy in the capital Amman.

[US Chief Negotiator to Meet Taliban in Qatar](#)

January 2, 2020, Voice of America

U.S. lead negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad is expected to meet Qatar-based Taliban envoys later this week to find out whether the insurgent group is ready to reduce violence in Afghanistan for the sake of resuming peace talks.

[United Nations Security Council to hear the latest on offensive in Syria's Idlib](#)

January 3, 2020, The Hindu

Syrian troops have captured more than 40 villages and hamlets over the past two weeks in the rebel stronghold in the northwest. The U.N. Security Council is going to receive a closed briefing on the ongoing offensive in the last rebel stronghold in Syria at the request of France and the United Kingdom.

[Turkey, Flexing Its Muscles, Will Send Troops to Libya](#)

January 2, 2020, The New York Times

Turkey's Parliament approved plans on Thursday to send troops to Libya, escalating what has become a chaotic proxy war between multiple powers for control of the oil-rich country.

[UAE crown prince visits Pakistan](#)

January 3, 2020, The Jerusalem Post

Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the crown prince of the United Arab Emirates and deputy supreme commander of the UAE Armed Forces, arrived with a high-level delegation for a day-long visit in Islamabad on Thursday afternoon.

United States

United States

[Top Iranian General Qassim Suleimani Is Killed on Trump's Orders, Officials Say](#)

Jan 2, 2020, New York Times

The commander of Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guards Corps was killed early Friday in a drone strike at Baghdad International Airport that was authorized by President Trump, American officials said.

[Asian shares stumble, oil surges after U.S. air strikes in Iraq](#)

January 3, 2020, Reuters

Asian shares fell on Friday, erasing early gains, while oil prices spiked after U.S. air strikes in Iraq killed a top Iranian commander, heightening geopolitical tensions.

[Deepening Alliance Between United States and India Faces Headwinds in 2020s](#)

December 31, 2019, Forbes

Unlike the deeply troubled U.S.-Saudi relationship, U.S.-India cooperation has long received bipartisan support in U.S. congress and presidency. But that relationship now faces headwinds that may hinder continued growth as we enter the 2020s.

[Trump Bet He Could Isolate Iran and Charm North Korea. It's Not That Easy.](#)

January 1, 2020, The New York Times

President Trump entered the new year facing flare-ups of long-burning crises with two old adversaries — Iran and North Korea — that are directly challenging his claim to have reasserted American power around the world.

[U.S. defense secretary urges North Korea to negotiate on denuclearization](#)

January 2, 2020, Reuters

U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Thursday said the United States still sees a political agreement on denuclearisation as the best path forward on North Korea, but that American forces remained prepared to fight if necessary.

[Trump campaign raises \\$46 million amid impeachment battle in the last quarter of 2019](#)

January 2, 2020, CNN

Amid escalating foreign policy crises and a looming Senate impeachment trial, President Donald Trump is entering 2020 with a sizable campaign war chest ahead of the presidential election.

[U.S. bolstering Mideast military presence after protests at embassy in Baghdad](#)

January 2, 2020, CBS

The United States is stepping up its military presence in the Middle East after two days of violent protests outside the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. The Iranian-backed protesters have moved their camp across the Tigris river after the attacks that left parts of the heavily-fortified embassy compound scorched and in ruins.

[Donald Trump says he will sign first phase of US-China trade deal](#)

December 31, 2019, The Guardian

Donald Trump has said he will sign the first phase of a long-awaited trade deal with China on 15 January, in a move that de-escalates the tariff war between the world's two biggest economies.

[Will a signed trade deal ease US-China tensions? Probably not.](#)

January 2, 2020, The Washington Post

Since October, negotiators from both countries have revealed details of a bilateral trade agreement that reportedly includes Chinese purchases of U.S. agricultural products and U.S. services, plus China's pledge to protect intellectual property and refrain from currency manipulation.

[2020: The year human spaceflight returns to the United States](#)

January 2, 2020, CNN

Since NASA retired its Space Shuttle program nine years ago, the public lost some of its interest in extra-terrestrial happenings. But this could be the year that not one, but four US spacecraft start launching astronauts or tourists.

[What U.S. Intelligence Thought 2020 Would Look Like](#)

December 31, 2019, The Atlantic

In 2004, American intelligence analysts consulted with hundreds of experts across five continents to try to predict what the world would look like in 2020. The result,

a 119-page report by the National Intelligence Council titled "Mapping the Global Future," is an eerie and illuminating read with 2020 now upon us.

[US sanctions Cuba defense chief for supporting Venezuela's Maduro](#)

January 3, 2020, Deutsche Welle

The State Department on Thursday announced that it was banning Cuba's defense minister from entering the United States, citing alleged human rights violations and his backing of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

Europe & Russia

Europe

[Why political and economic crisis could move from the UK to Germany in 2020](#)

December 30, 2019, CNBC

Political instability in Germany, coupled with ongoing economy uncertainty, could mean that the disruption seen in the U.K. during its Brexit crisis could shift across the continent to Europe's largest economy, according to economists and market watchers.

[Can Merkel and Macron get Franco-German relations back on track?](#)

January 2, 2020, The Guardian

As a year of big EU decisions begins, the bloc's most important relationship is stuck in a rut.

[France protests: Longest strike in decades stuck in deadlock](#)

January 2, 2020, BBC

France's transport strike against pension reform has entered its 29th day, making it the longest rail workers' strike since May 1968. The government says the changes are necessary to make the system fairer and more sustainable, but unions say workers will lose out.

[India signals duty cuts on wine, auto; EU keen on investment protection](#)

January 3, 2020, Business Standard

Despite India's willingness to slash tariffs on wines and automobiles from the European Union (EU), the bloc remains firm that its concerns on investment protection will need to be addressed in any future bilateral deal.

[Germany takes nuclear plant offline, final six to close over two years](#)

December 30, 2019, Reuters

Germany will take another step towards completing its withdrawal from nuclear power when EnBW (EBKG.DE) pulls the plug on the Philippsburg 2 power station on New Year's Eve, leaving half a dozen plants still to close over the next two years.

[Britain says will raise minimum wage by more than 6% in 2020](#)

Britain's national minimum wage will rise by more than 6% next year, taking it to 8.74 pounds an hour, the government announced on Tuesday.

[Croatia's EU presidency: What will it bring for Europe?](#)

December 31, 2019, Deutsche Welle

On January 1, Croatia assumed the six-month rotating presidency of the EU Council. With countries wanting both in and out of the bloc, what can the EU's youngest member do?

[UK-India maritime cooperation in Indo-Pacific; would the British commit?](#)

December 30, 2019, Economic Times

India is currently modernising all aspects of its forces and also actively indigenizing manufacturing of defence equipment. The United Kingdom on the other hand, is looking forward to aligning their views with the members of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), especially India.

[Catalan separatists to break Spain's political deadlock](#)

January 3, 2020, Reuters

A Catalan separatist party said on Thursday it would abstain during the Spanish parliament's upcoming vote to confirm Socialist leader Pedro Sanchez as prime minister, potentially ending the prolonged national political deadlock.

Russia

[Russia's oil production hits post-Soviet time record in 2019](#)

January 3, 2019, TASS

Russia's oil production in 2019 reached 560.2 million tonnes, exceeding the levels of 2017 and 2018 when it hit a record high of 549 million tonnes and 556 million tonnes, according to the Central Dispatching Department of the Fuel Energy Complex.

[Russian lawmaker calls for resolving Libyan conflict peacefully](#)

January 3, 2019, TASS

The domestic crisis in Libya needs to be resolved peacefully, while the deployment of Turkish troops may deteriorate the situation in the country, Russian State Duma (the lower house of parliament) Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Leonid Slutsky said.

[Austrian government plans to maintain dialogue with Russia](#)

January 2, 2019, TASS

Austria's new coalition government led by Chancellor Sebastian Kurz plans to boost the Sochi Dialogue public forum aimed at maintaining dialogue with Russia, the Austrian People's Party and the Greens said in the 2020-2024 joint government program available to TASS. According to the document, the Austrian government will also call for easing sanctions on Russia if the Minsk Agreements on the Ukrainian crisis are implemented.

[Putin's 2020 agenda to focus on 75th victory day celebrations](#)

January 1, 2019, TASS

Russian President Vladimir Putin's 2020 agenda will include domestic and international events, while the focus will be on the 75th anniversary celebration of the Soviet Union's Victory over Nazi Germany in the Great Patriotic War.

[Will Russia Enforce Its New Internet Laws in 2020?](#)

January 3, 2019, The Moscow Times

It's been two months since Russia passed the sovereign internet law giving it the right to cut Runet – the Russian part of the internet – off from the rest of the online world. Not much has changed, despite fears that the new legislation would usher in an era of strict control.

[Russia's Oil Output Hits Post-Soviet High Despite OPEC+ Deal](#)

January 3, 2019, The Moscow Times

Russia's crude oil and condensate output hit a post-Soviet high last year even as it curbed production under an agreement with OPEC.

[Russia in 2020: Where Are All the Foreign Banks?](#)

January 3, 2019, The Moscow Times

With inflation and interest rates coming down, Russia's businesses in little need of corporate loans, and new regulations to tighten the consumer loan market coming into force – more than one in every three financial institutions told Deloitte they were not looking forward to what the future has in store.

[The Future of Putin's Information Autocracy](#)

January 2, 2019, The Moscow Times

From Hitler to Stalin, and from Mussolini to Mao, the world's twentieth-century dictators took to heart Niccolò Machiavelli's famous dictum that "it is better to be

feared than loved.” Yet most modern dictators seem more concerned about maintaining their people’s loyalty not by giving them what they want, but by manipulating them into thinking they already have it. Nobody executes this approach more masterfully than Russian President Vladimir Putin.

[Putin’s Grand Gas Project Makes Sense Now](#)

December 26, 2019, The Moscow Times

In the space of just a few momentous weeks, one of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s most ambitious projects — a Russian natural gas export system to match the new geopolitical reality rather than the Cold War-era one — has taken its final shape. It will probably last, without major change, until the end of Russia’s run as a top energy exporter.

Africa & Latin America

Latin America

[US warns Argentina that IMF deal is threatened by ties with leftist allies](#)

January 1, 2019, Buenos Aires Times

Senior Trump administration official tells Bloomberg that sheltering Evo Morales and engaging with Nicolás Maduro crosses a red line – and it could cost Argentina investment in the Vaca Muerta shale fields.

[Argentina Is Getting Four Ex-U.S. Navy P-3C Patrol Planes](#)

January 1, 2019, The National Interest

The U.S. State Department has signed off on Argentina's proposed purchase of four ex-U.S. Navy P-3C patrol planes. The \$78-million acquisition, should Buenos Aires follow through on it, would continue the slow regeneration of Argentina's air power.

[Argentina clings to wreckage of Macri economics](#)

December 27, 2019, Deutsche Welle

The number of people in poverty in the country is nearing 40%, according to the World Bank. The economy – already reeling from rising inflation, which has topped 50%, and ballooning external debt, which is at about 90% of GDP – is expected to shrink by 3.1% in 2019.

[Chile economic activity down 3.3% in November as mining slumps](#)

January 2, 2019, Reuters

Chile's economic activity CLACTI=ECI dropped 3.3% in November, led by a slump in mining activity, the central bank said on Thursday, and officials predicted low growth for the coming year as the country reels from anti-government unrest.

[Despite unrest, Chile courts billions in foreign investment](#)

December 30, 2019, Al Jazeera

Chile's foreign reputation for sound fiscal management has survived the biggest social upheaval in a generation largely intact, market indicators show. The government says it now intends to cash in on that credibility.

[Brazil's Bolsonaro Keeps to Far-Right, Faces Tough 2nd Year](#)

December 31, 2019, VOA

Heading into his second year as Brazil's president, Jair Bolsonaro has held firm to his combative culture-warrior policies while feuding with critics at home and abroad - an approach that has thrilled supporters but eroded his efforts to win allies and lift the world's 9th-largest economy out of its doldrums.

[Companies from China return to investment in Brazil in 2019](#)

December 31, 2019, Macahub

Investments made by Chinese companies in Brazil increased once again in 2019, after a period of cooling in 2018, according to a survey carried out by the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) consultancy at the request of the Brazilian Power360 website.

[U.S. expands scope of program to return migrants to Mexico](#)

January 3, 2019, Reuters

The United States will expand the scope of a program that returns non-Mexican migrants crossing Mexico's border to that country to await their U.S. court hearings, the Department of Homeland Security said.

[Bolivia's spat with Spain, Mexico deepens over Morales's allies](#)

December 30, 2019, Al Jazeera

Spain will expel three Bolivian diplomatic staff from Madrid in a tit-for-tat move after Bolivia's interim government on Monday asked two Spanish diplomats, as well as the Mexican ambassador, to leave the country, the foreign ministry said.

[Mexico president urges Bolivia to respect right of asylum](#)

December 28, 2019, Al Jazeera

Mexico has urged Bolivia's new conservative government to respect its right to grant asylum to nine people at its embassy in La Paz, days after complaining that Bolivian government surveillance there has grown excessive.

[US Slaps Sanctions on Cuba Defense Minister over Support for Venezuela's Maduro](#)

January 2, 2019, VOA

The United States imposed sanctions on Cuba's defense minister, accusing him of human rights violations and supporting socialist Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement.

Africa

[Africa's instability and security concerns](#)

January 2, 2019, Ghana News Agency

Africa's dynamic security environment is characterised by great diversity from conventional challenges such as insurgencies, resource and identity conflicts, and post-conflict stabilisation to growing threats from piracy, narcotics trafficking, violent extremism, and organised crime taking root in Africa's urban slums, among others.

[Egypt to Hand African Union Presidency to South Africa in February](#)

December 30, 2019, Asharq Al- Awsat

Egypt had taken over the presidency from Rwanda in 2019, for a one-year term. Cairo also co-chaired this year the Russia–Africa Summit and had participated in leading international forums to represent the continent.

[Polad to engage SADC, African Union](#)

December 31, 2019, The Herald

Parties under the Political Actors Dialogue (POLAD) plan to engage SADC, African Union, European Union and United Nations member states to explain their mandate as they press ahead with finding lasting solutions to the country's economic challenges.

[China in Africa: Developmental partnership or imperial dominance?](#)

December 27, 2019, ORF Online.org

As the major Asian and the second largest world power after the US, China has already emerged as the most significant player in Africa. Its role in Africa is too complex to be comfortably squeezed in any simplistic stereotype such as 'altruistic' or 'neo-imperial'.

[Sudan plane crash: Children among victims in West Darfur](#)

January 3, 2019, BBC News

A Sudanese military plane has crashed in West Darfur state killing at least 18 people, including four children. The aircraft crashed five minutes after taking off from an airport in the state capital of El Geneina. A Sudanese military plane has crashed in West Darfur state killing at least 18 people, including four children. The aircraft crashed five minutes after taking off from an airport in the state capital of El Geneina.

[Al Qaeda affiliate Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for Somalia truck bombing that killed 85](#)

December 31, 2019, CNN

Al Qaeda affiliate Al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for a truck bombing in Somalia that killed 85 people outside Mogadishu, the group's spokesman said.

[America's Downsized Relationship with Africa Is About to Go Totally Adrift](#)

January 2, 2019, WPR

Since the end of the Cold War, American relations with Africa have been characterized by a single, powerful trend: disengagement. Its direction has been so constant that it is tempting to think of it as a fixed given, but that would be a mistake. In reality, over the past three decades, this troubling trend has only accelerated.

[In South Sudan, China Circumvents Cumbersome Mediation](#)

January 3, 2019, International Policy Digest

Turbulent conflict in the world's newest country, South Sudan, has invited China's presence to mediate the peace process. The crisis in South Sudan is challenging China's longstanding principle of non-interference. Wang Yi, China's foreign minister, has repeatedly asserted that Beijing's main intention in Africa is to ensure stability and resilience for African states.

[India strengthens strategic ties with South Africa](#)

December 31, 2019, Business Standard

The bilateral ties between India and South Africa further deepened in 2019 with the two countries stepping up their cooperation in the area of defence and developing a road map to enhance their strategic partnership.



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