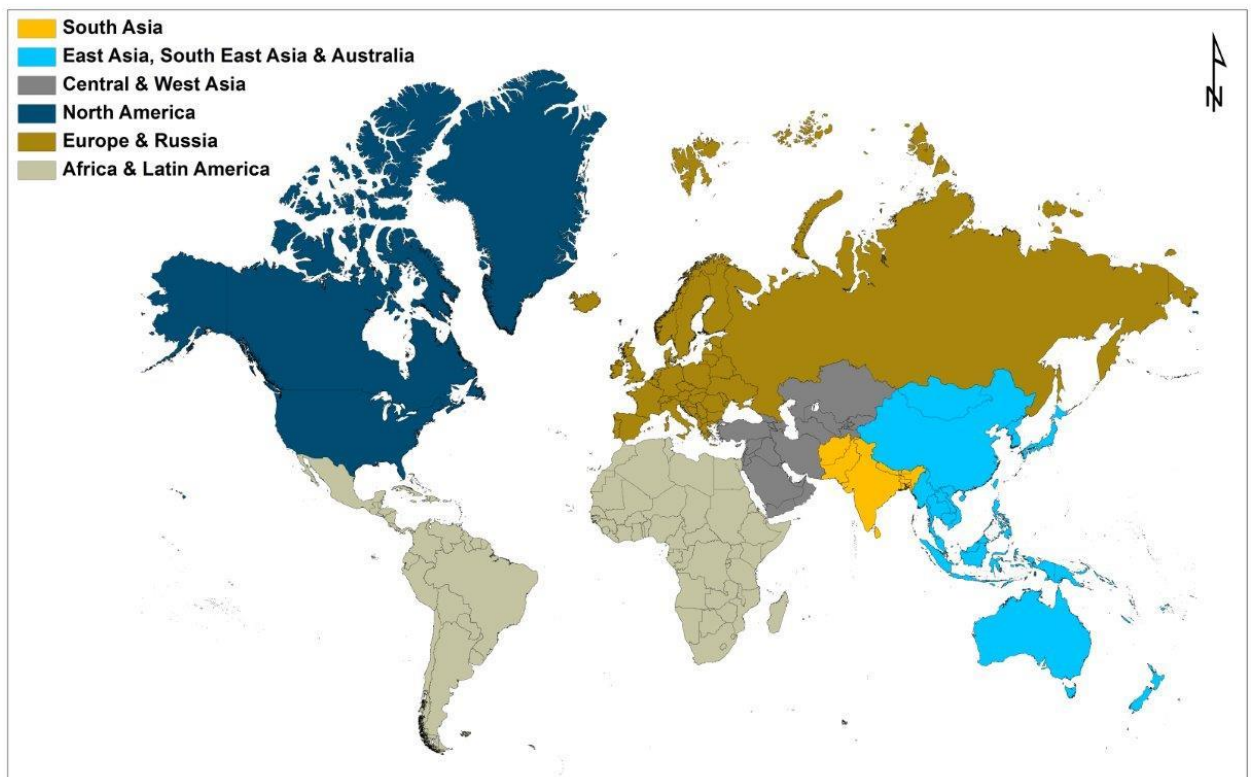




Delhi Policy Group

DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



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DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

Volume 4, Issue 1

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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Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Angana Guha Roy at angana@dpg.org.in.

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Delhi Policy Group
Core 5A, 1st Floor,
India Habitat Centre,
Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003.
www.delhipolicygroup.org

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South Asia

India

[The significance of the post of CDS lies in its potential for re-imagining national security](#)

January 10, 2020, The Indian Express

At the risk of sounding hyperbolic, it must be said that the creation of a Department of Military Affairs (DMA), with a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) at its head, on New Year's Day 2020, was the most significant development in the national security domain since Independence.

[No takers for your malware: India slams Pakistan at UN](#)

January 10, 2020, The Times of India

India's permanent representative to the United Nations, Su=yed Akbaruddin, on Thursday lambasted Pakistan for peddling false narrative on New Delhi and said there are no "takers for your malware here".

[Trump administration doesn't want India to degrade its defence capabilities: US official on CAATSA](#)

January 9, 2020, Financial Express

The US has said in the past it was working with countries, including India, to help them identify and avoid engaging in potentially sanctionable activities under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

[Why envoys of 15 countries are visiting Jammu and Kashmir](#)

January 9, 2020, The Times of India

Fifteen envoys are travelling to J& K on Thursday where they are scheduled to meet civil society members and will also be briefed on the security situation in the Union Territory.

[India, US looking at an exclusive trade partnership: Shringla](#)

January 8, 2020, The Economic Times

India and the US are looking for an "exclusive partnership" that can give companies of both the nations preferential market access, India's outgoing Ambassador to the US Harsh Vardhan Shringla has said

[World Bank pegs India's growth for FY20 at 5%](#)

January 09, 2020, Economic Times

The World Bank on January 08 cut India's growth for financial year 2020 to 5% from 6% estimated earlier, a day after the country's statistics office pegged growth in the current financial year at 5%, the lowest in 11 years.

[Trump admin doesn't want to degrade India's defence capabilities: Official](#)

January 09, 2020, Business Standard

The Trump administration does not want to degrade India's defence capabilities, a senior US official has said, asserting that there will be a case-by-case analysis on where punitive measures under the CAATSA could be applied on countries buying significant military equipment from Russia.

[Indian Navy deploys warship in Gulf region following spiralling tension between US, Iran](#)

January 09, 2020, Economic Times

The Indian Navy has deployed warships in the Gulf region to ensure security of India's sea-borne trade and effectively respond to any emergent situation in the wake of fast escalating tension between the US and Iran, officials said on January 08.

[Iran's foreign minister JavadZarif to visit India next week](#)

January 09, 2020, Live Mint

Iranian foreign minister JavadZarif will be in New Delhi next week when India is expected to convey that peace, security and stability in the Gulf region was of importance given New Delhi's dependence on fuel imports and the presence of about 7-8 million Indian expatriates in the region.

[Chabahar must remain out of sanction: Rajnath to Esper](#)

January 09, 2020, Defence Aviation Post

"In the past US has shown understanding on the importance of Chabahar project and its importance to provide continuous connectivity to Afghanistan. We hope US exempts Chabahar from the sanctions," Raveesh Kumar, spokesperson, Ministry of External Affairs said here. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday had a telephonic conversation with the US Secretary of Defence Mark T Esper during which the two ministers spoke about the Gulf crisis besides bilateral ties.

[After Russia protests, MoD to take call on \\$2.5 bn deal](#)

January 07, 2020, Economic Times

The defence ministry is set to take a call on a \$2.5-billion purchase of new air defence systems for the Army after Russia strongly protested the selection of a South Korean manufacturer and sought a re-evaluation, claiming it was unfairly disqualified.

[Rajnath Singh holds telephonic conversation with Japanese defence minister](#)

January 09, 2020, Times of India

"The two defence ministers had discussions on enhancing the bilateral security cooperation under the framework of the India-Japan special strategic and global partnership", a statement released by the defence ministry said.

[Northern Army Commander visits China to improve military ties including training](#)

January 08, 2020, Economic Times

Singh met the Commander of the PLA (People's Liberation Army) ground forces, General Han Weiguo. "The two Generals discussed issues having strategic ramifications to include regional security environment, joint training and measures to enhance peace and tranquillity along the borders," a statement issued by the army reads.

[Industrial security pact represents historic progression between India, US: Lockheed VP VivekLall](#)

January 09, 2020, The Hindu Business Line

The Industrial Security Agreement (ISA) represents a historic progression between India and the US, and is set to facilitate close technology transfer with the Indian private industry, a top Lockheed official has said. The agreement, which was signed during the December 2019 2+2 Dialogue, will also ease the process of doing business, including applying for licences to support mutual interests, said Vice President (Strategy and Business Development) at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics VivekLall.

[India's ballistic missile shield ready, IAF & DRDO to seek govt nod to protect Delhi](#)

January 08, 2020, The Print

India's indigenous Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) programme is complete, and the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) are now working on a proposal to seek the government's

nod to install the missile shield for the national capital. The BMD, along with the Russian S-400 Triumf air defence system, aims to secure the country from all kinds of incoming missiles, including nuclear, and flying objects.

[Palm Oil Imports: India Warns Malaysia That Bilateral Ties Are 'Factored' in Trade Transactions](#)

January 10, 2020, The Wire

A day after India imposed restrictions on imports of refined palm oil with an eye to shutting out Malaysia, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday that the "status" of bilateral ties are a factor for Indian businessmen to buy products from a particular country. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) had issued a notification on January 8 that foreign trade policy had been amended from "free" to "restricted" for three categories under refined palm oil.

[Alice Wells to visit India on Jan 15](#)

January 10, 2020, Big News Network

Alice Wells, US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary (PDAS), is scheduled to visit India from January 15 for a three-day visit to attend Raisina Dialogue. During her visit, she will meet with senior government officials to advance the US-India strategic global partnership following the success of the 2019 US-India 22 Ministerial Dialogue and will discuss topics of mutual interest with members of the business community and civil society.

Pakistan

[Pakistan's National Assembly passes bills to extend General Qamar Javed Bajwa's tenure](#)

January 7, 2020, India Today

Pakistan's National Assembly, the lower house of Parliament, on Tuesday passed three crucial bills to give extension to Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa for another three years.

[Dark arts and malware: India blasts Pakistan at UN Security Council debate](#)

January 10, 2020, India Today

India tore into Pakistan Thursday at an open debate at the UN Security Council, accusing its representatives of epitomising "the dark arts" and "peddling falsehoods".

[Pakistan asks UN to 'act decisively' to prevent a 'disastrous war' with India](#)

January 10, 2020, Dawn News

Pakistan has asked the United Nations Security Council and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to "act decisively" to prevent a "disastrous war" between Pakistan and India.

[World Bank revises Pakistan's growth projections downward](#)

January 10, 2020, Gulf Times

The World Bank slightly lowered Pakistan's growth rate projections for the current fiscal year and next two years owing to continuation of tight monetary policy and fiscal consolidation coupled with external factors.

[China's Warships Hold Joint Naval Drill With Pakistan](#)

January 8, 2020, Voice of America

Pakistan and China have launched a major joint naval drill in the Arabian Sea to, as officials put it, deepen their security cooperation and consolidate an "all-weather strategic partnership" between the two allied nations.

[Pakistan, China getting closer with new social, economic cooperation: Pakistani minister](#)

January 9, 2020, Xinhua Net

Pakistan's Education Minister Shafqat Mahmood said on Thursday that the friendship between Pakistan and China is getting stronger and more multidimensional with new avenues of cooperation in social and economic sectors.

[Second Phase of China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement Becomes Operational](#)

January 7, 2020, News 18

The second phase of the China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement came into effect early this month providing zero duty facility to over a thousand Pakistani products, while Islamabad continues to grapple with huge trade deficit with Beijing despite the inflow of large Chinese investments into the country under the CPEC.

[Pakistan won't take sides in Iran-U.S. confrontation: foreign minister](#)

January 6, 2020, Reuters

Pakistan will not take sides in the escalating confrontation between neighboring Iran and the United States, its foreign minister said on Monday, following the killing of Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani in a U.S. drone strike.

Afghanistan

[More than 1,000 Daesh fighters active in Kunar: Governor](#)

January 8, 2020, Tolo News

Local officials in the eastern province of Kunar on Wednesday raised concerns over Daesh activity in four districts of the province. The governor of Kunar, Abdul Sattar Mirzakwal, said that around 1,200 fighters--including foreigners-- are active locally.

[Ex-Taliban Members Expect Development in Peace Efforts](#)

January 7, 2020, Tolo News

Taliban has yet to share the results of their consultations with Khalilzad who, is back in Qatar and has held an informal meeting with Taliban deputy leader Abdul Ghani Baradar. But, the group is expected to agree on a reduction of violence in the near future.

[US Ambassador to Afghanistan steps down](#)

January 7, 2020, abc News

John Bass's departure was long-planned and part of the normal rotation cycle, with American ambassadors serving in Kabul for only two years. The State Department has named Ross Wilson as chargé d'affaires ad interim at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul until a new ambassador is confirmed.

["Afghan soil will not be used against other nations": Ghani](#)

January 3, 2020, Tolo News

President Ashraf Ghani issued a statement saying that the "Afghan government reassures the Afghan people and the neighboring countries that Afghanistan's territory will not be used against any other nation in the region." This is a response to US air strike in Baghdad that killed Qassem Soleimani, the head of Iran's elite Quds Force, and several others.

[Secretary Michael R. Pompeo's Call with Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani](#)

January 3, 2020, US Department of State

Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo spoke Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani to discuss President Trump's recent decision to take defensive action to protect U.S. personnel abroad by killing Qassem Soleimani in response to threats to American lives. Secretary Pompeo underscored the Iranian regime's destabilizing actions through the region and the Trump Administration's resolve in protecting American interests, personnel, facilities and partners.

Bangladesh

[Bangladesh-Myanmar border conference begins in Dhaka](#)

January 05, 2020, AA News

A high-profile border conference between the border security forces of Bangladesh and Myanmar began in the former's capital Dhaka on January 05. Issues of bilateral interest, such as illegal entering of Myanmar's citizens into Bangladesh, curbing smuggling especially narcotics, combating border crimes including terrorist activities and launching combined patrolling in common borders will be highlighted in the five-day conference, according to a press release by the Border Guard Bangladesh.

[Bangladesh to receive final surplus UK C-130J airlifter in March](#)

January 08, 2020, IHS Jane

Bangladesh is to receive the last of five UK-surplus Lockheed Martin C-130J Hercules transport aircraft in the coming weeks, the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) said on 7 January. All of the 'short-bodied' C-130Js (designated C5 in Royal Air Force [RAF] service) were originally due to be with the Bangladesh Air Force by the end of 2019, but with four aircraft now in-country the MoD said the final one is now expected to be handed over in March.

[Indian Coast Guards Ships arrive in Bangladesh for joint training](#)

January 06, 2020, United News of India

As part of ongoing bilateral exchanges between Bangladesh and the Indian Coast Guard, two Indian Coast Guard ships, ICGS Sujay and ICGS Sarojini Naidu arrived at the Mongla Port on January 06. According to a press release of the Indian High Commission in Dhaka, personnel from both Coast Guards will interact closely and

exchange best practices being followed by each other, as well as undertake joint training in areas of mutual interest.

[WB trims Bangladesh growth forecast](#)

January 10, 2020, The Daily Star

The World Bank has cut its economic growth forecast for Bangladesh by 0.2 percentage points to 7.2 percent for the current fiscal year, but the country is still poised to clock in the highest growth in South Asia.

Nepal

[Nepal not to join any military alliance: DPM Pokharel](#)

January 09, 2020, My Republica

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Ishwar Pokharel has clarified that Nepal won't participate in any kind of military alliance. At a press meet organized by Nepal Press Organization in Pokhara on Thursday, DPM Pokharel said that the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) pact to be given by the USA to Nepal is under-consideration in parliament and it would be decided by analyzing every angle so that there would be no compromise on national interest and policy.

Sri Lanka

[Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena to meet External Affairs Minister Jaishankar on January 9](#)

January 09, 2020, The Hindu

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the visiting Foreign Minister will meet Mr. Jaishankar in the morning, after a meeting with the Foreign Secretary. Mr. Gunawardena's visit comes over a month after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was in New Delhi, on his maiden visit abroad after being elected to the country's highest office in the November presidential election.

[Sri Lanka- Concerns raised over Chinese-built Y-12 planes used by SLAF](#)

January 04, 2020, Colombo Gazette

Concerns have been raised over Chinese-built Y-12 turboprop planes used by the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) after one such plane crashed on January 03.

[Foreign Ministers of China & Russia to visit Sri Lanka](#)

January 09, 2020, Lanka Business Online

Foreign Ministers of China & Russia will meet their Sri Lankan counterpart during a transit visit to the country next week, Ministry of Foreign Relations revealed. Accordingly, visiting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Sergey Lavrov will hold a bilateral meeting and a joint media conference with Dinesh Gunawardena, Minister of Foreign Relations on 14 January 2020. Visiting State Councillor and Foreign Minister of China, Wang Yi will have a courtesy call on Minister Dinesh Gunawardena at the Ministry on the same day.

[EU invited to invest in SL](#)

January 07, 2020, Daily news

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has asked the European Union (EU) to view Sri Lanka in a positive light as a potential investment hub. The President made this request at a meeting with the ambassadors of European Union member countries at the Presidential Secretariat yesterday morning. While inviting investments from the European Union, the President explained to the ambassadors about Sri Lanka's neutral foreign policy.

East & South East Asia

China

[How should China develop in the 2020s?](#)

January 9, 2020, Global Times

It is a burdensome and risky task to be the world's second-largest economy. China has been undergoing increasing challenges in the past few years. Strategically, the 2020s would be an extremely hard decade for China.

[US gains limited from changed China policy](#)

January 8, 2020, Global Times

The year 2019 has been one in which US sought to reconstruct its relations with China. First, the US reset the premise of its policies toward China. From former president Bill Clinton to Barack Obama, Washington used to consider living with a rising China conditionally as the precondition; but since Donald Trump took office, he has changed the relatively friendly premise into a hostile one. Trying to slow down China's development and preventing the country from surpassing or even replacing the US have become the real intention of his China policy.

[US naïve to think Iran won't fight back](#)

January 6, 2020, Global Times

Iran announced on Sunday it would suspend its commitments to the 2015 nuclear deal. On the same day, Iraq's parliament called for all foreign troops to leave its soil. Washington must have felt that today's situation in the Middle East is trickier than before the US military killed Iranian military commander Qasem Soleimani.

[Iran issue should not be taken simply](#)

January 6, 2020, Global Times

US President Donald Trump on Sunday warned if "Iran strikes any Americans, or American assets," 52 Iranian sites "will be hit very fast and very hard," and said the US "will be sending some of that brand new beautiful equipment their way."

[Washington eyes short-term interest with assassination](#)

January 3, 2020, Global Times

The US killed Iranian Major-General Qassem Soleimani, head of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, a commander of Iraq's Shia Hashd al-Shaabi, or Popular Mobilization Units, in an early-morning drone strike on Friday. The US operation shook the Middle East. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei threatened "a harsh retaliation"

against the US. The US Embassy in Baghdad and the US State Department on Friday called on Americans in Iraq to "immediately leave" Iraq.

[Chinese president to visit Myanmar next week](#)

January 10, 2020, Xinhua

At the invitation of Myanmar's President U Win Myint, Chinese President Xi Jinping will pay a state visit to Myanmar from Jan. 17 to 18, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying announced on Friday.

[China, Djibouti FMs hold talks, vowing to push strategic partnership to new level](#)

January 9, 2020, Xinhua

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Thursday vowed to boost pragmatic cooperation with Djibouti and called for promoting the bilateral strategic partnership to a new level.

[Transparency can check spread of virus: China Daily editorial](#)

January 9, 2020, China Daily

That there has been no panic about the dozens of pneumonia cases in and around the country, primarily in Wuhan, capital of Central China's Hubei province, where the number of cases had risen to 59 on Friday, can be attributed to lessons having been learned from the SARS epidemic about the importance of transparency.

[Words of de-escalation call for actions: China Daily editorial](#)

January 9, 2020, China Daily

In the wake of the United States airstrike that killed prominent Iranian general Qassem Soleimani, and Iran's pledge to take revenge, there were worries that what would ensue would be a spiral of escalation.

[Signing of Sino-US trade deal will be confidence booster for global growth: China Daily editorial](#)

January 9, 2020, China Daily

With China's Commerce Ministry confirming that Vice-Premier Liu He will lead a delegation to Washington next week to sign the gestated trade deal with the United States, there is optimism that the trade tensions between the world's two largest economies will now be less acute.

[Tech decoupling will not keep US first: China Daily editorial](#)

January 8, 2020, China Daily

The Consumer Electronics Show, which has served as the proving ground for innovators and breakthrough technologies worldwide for decades, used to be a

magnet for Chinese high-tech giants seeking to build their brands and forge global partnerships – so much so that many have joked that CES stands for the China Electronics Show.

['Yellow'-only economy divorced from reality: China Daily editorial](#)

January 5, 2020, China Daily

That the anti-government forces in Hong Kong have classified businesses, mainly restaurants and clothes shops, as being yellow, blue or green, and marked them on maps on an app they have launched shows that they are willing to sacrifice other people's livelihoods for their own aggrandizement.

[Stricter IPR protection sign of fair competition: China Daily editorial](#)

January 5, 2020, China Daily

That a company in Shenzhen was ordered to pay a total of 6 million yuan (\$860,000) in compensation to MGM Holdings for infringement of the latter's trademark and unfair competition last week indicates that China means what it says about the protection of intellectual property rights.

Japan

[Abe heading to Mideast as planned ahead of warship dispatch](#)

January 10, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is proceeding as planned with a trip to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Oman from the weekend, ahead of dispatching a warship and patrol planes to the Middle East and despite heightened tensions in the area.

[Japan says it has sought help from Lebanon over Ghosn](#)

January 7, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

Japan has asked Lebanon for help regarding Carlos Ghosn, a top Japanese official said on Tuesday, calling the former auto executive's escape to Beirut "regrettable" but stopping short of spelling out what Tokyo was seeking from local authorities.

[Demonstrators at U.S. Embassy in Tokyo call for peace in Iran](#)

January 7, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

Protesters in Tokyo on Jan. 6 denounced the United States for heightening the possibility of war with Iran and demanded the Japanese government scrap its planned dispatch of the Self-Defense Forces to the Middle East.

[Japan eyes tie-up with ASEAN member nations to develop aircraft industry](#)

January 5, 2020, The Japan Times

The government is planning to work with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to promote the development of the aviation industry, according to informed sources.

[PM launches Vietnam's 2020 ASEAN Chairmanship](#)

January 7, 2020, Vietnam News

Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc chaired a ceremony in Ha Noi to launch Việt Nam's 2020 ASEAN Chairmanship. Speaking at the event, PM Phuc said throughout its 25 years of ASEAN membership, Việt Nam has always made responsible contributions to ASEAN co-operation.

[Myanmar Military Shrugs Off Western Union Decision to Cut Ties With Army-owned Bank](#)

January 9, 2020, Radio Free Asia

Myanmar's armed forces said a decision by money transfer company Western Union to cut ties to a military-owned bank over army atrocities against the Muslim Rohingya ethnic minority violates the rights of military families.

Korea

[Trump meets top Seoul official amid NK tensions](#)

January 10, 2020, The Korea Herald

US President Donald Trump met with the top national security advisers of South Korea and Japan in Washington on Wednesday, the White House said, as nuclear talks between Washington and North Korea remain deadlocked.

[Assembly passes eased data regulation, introduces prosecution reform bill](#)

January 10, 2020, The Korea Herald

South Korea's parliament passed three bills intended to ease regulations on the use of personal information, despite objection from privacy advocates, as the country strives to catch up in the fiercely competitive data economy.

[Assembly passes eased data regulation, introduces prosecution reform bill](#)

January 10, 2020, The Korea Herald

South Korea's parliament passed three bills intended to ease regulations on the use of personal information, despite objection from privacy advocates, as the country strives to catch up in the fiercely competitive data economy.

[S. Korea closely monitoring tension in Middle East: finance minister](#)

January 10, 2020, The Korea Herald

South Korea is closely monitoring tensions in the Middle East, although a conflict between the United States and Iran is not escalating, Finance Minister Hong Nam-ki said.

[US grant-making group provides \\$11m for NK human rights projects](#)

January 10, 2020, The Korea Herald

The National Endowment for Democracy, a congressionally funded US grant-making organization, provided more than \$11.2 million over the past four years to human rights groups working on North Korea, recent data showed.

[NK newspaper calls for 'impregnable' military power against threats](#)

January 6, 2020, The Korea Times

North Korea's official newspaper called Monday for building up "impregnable" military power, saying the country should expect nothing from the United States and therefore go its own way without hesitation.

[US flies surveillance aircraft to monitor N. Korea amid tensions](#)

January 6, 2020, The Korea Times

The United States flew surveillance aircraft over the Korean Peninsula, an aviation tracker said, Monday, amid simmering tensions over possible provocative acts by North Korea after it warned of a "new strategic weapon."

Southeast Asia

[Vietnam boosts defence co-operation among Asean members](#)

January 10, 2020, Eleven

Vietnam looks forward to continued support and contributions from Asean member states during its chairmanship of the Asean Community, and for the common interests and success of Asean 2020.

[Strengthening the ASEAN-centric multilateral security architecture](#)

January 7, 2020, East Asia Forum

For a good part of the post-Cold War period, ASEAN enjoyed relative success as the central multilateral organisation in its region. Its expansion through the late 1990s, as well as its inclusive approach towards non-ASEAN powers, helped it become the main convener of multilateral dialogue and cooperative platforms in the wider Asia Pacific.

[South China Sea issue to feature in ASEAN talks](#)

January 3, 2020, New Straits Times

Vietnam is expected to ensure all Asean meetings touch on the South China Sea issue to enable the regional grouping to be better prepared in dealing with China.

[Myanmar has potential investments from ASEAN countries in 2020-20 FY](#)

January 9, 2020, Eleven

Myanmar has potential investments from Hong Kong and ASEAN countries such as Singapore and Thailand in 2020-20 FY, according to the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations.

Central & West Asia

Central Asia

[Uzbekistan Reportedly Completes Demining Work on Tajik Border](#)

January 10, 2020, The Diplomat

Reinvigorated bilateral work on the border has led to news this week not only that the demining work has been completed, but that the Uzbek and Tajik sides are moving forward from delimiting their border to demarcation. As reported by Trend, the Joint Uzbek-Tajik Demarcation Commission met for the first time in Tashkent this week. A protocol was signed and the schedule to meetings for 2020 set.

[Uzbekistan's economy grows 5.5 pct in 2020](#)

January 6, 2020, Xinhua Net

Uzbekistan's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 5.5 percent exceeding the projected rate of 5.4 percent this year, Uzbek Ministry of Economy and Industry said.

[OUTLOOK 2020 Uzbekistan](#)

January 6, 2020, Intelli News

Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev enters the fourth year of his "post-Karimov" bid to throw open the doors of his country to investors from near and far having accelerated efforts across 2020.

[OUTLOOK 2020 TAJIKISTAN](#)

January 7, 2020, IntelliNews

Some Tajik political analysts suggest that if Rustam Emomali does end up running he may move to bring in a freer and more democratic political and social environment.

[Uzbekistan, Tajikistan sign border demarcation protocol](#)

January 9, 2020, The Diplomat

U.S. Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice Wells made a two-day visit to Tajikistan from January 6-7. The visit went ahead even as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo postponed his own trip to the region on account of the flaring of tensions in the Middle East.

[How Much Is The Russian Military Helping Turkmenistan?](#)

January 4, 2020, Rferl.org

There are some indications that Russia might be doing more than simply warning Turkmenistan about the threats spilling across its border with Afghanistan.

West Asia

[Iran launches missile attacks on US airbases in Iraq](#)

January 10, 2020, Gulf News

Iran said it launched a missile attack on US-led forces in Iraq in the early hours of Wednesday in retaliation for the US drone strike on an Iranian commander whose killing has raised fears of a wider war in the Middle East.

[Iraq's Outgoing Prime Minister Says U.S. Troops Must Leave](#)

January 7, 2020, Time

Iraq's outgoing prime minister said Tuesday that the United States has no alternative and must pull its troops out of the country, or else face an impending crisis. But President Donald Trump countered that it's not the right time for a pullout and that it would be the worst thing that could happen to Iraq.

[Iran's foreign minister Javad Zarif to visit India next week](#)

January 9, 2020, Livemint

Iranian foreign minister Javad Zarif will be in New Delhi next week when India is expected to convey that peace, security and stability in the Gulf region was of importance given New Delhi's dependence on fuel imports and the presence of about 7-8 million Indian expatriates in the region.

[Will welcome any Indian peace initiative for de-escalating tensions with US: Iran](#)

January 8, 2020, Livemint

Iran will welcome any peace initiative by India to de-escalate tensions with the US following the killing of Iranian military commander Qasem Soleimani, the Iranian envoy here said on Wednesday while asserting that his country wants peace not war.

[U.S., Allies Believe Ukraine Plane Was Shot Down by Iran](#)

January 9, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

U.S., Canadian and U.K. officials believe that a Ukrainian commercial aircraft that crashed shortly after takeoff from Tehran on Wednesday, killing all 176 people on board, was downed by a missile system fired by Iran, possibly by mistake.

[US envoy: Next plan is to let Israel annex West Bank](#)

January 9, 2020, Middle East Monitor

US Ambassador to Israel David Friedman said yesterday that America's next step, after recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital and Israel's sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights, is the annexation of the occupied West Bank.

[India, Oman hold joint naval exercise](#)

January 8, 2020, Times of Oman

The Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), represented by several RNO vessels military vessels of the Indian Navy, are conducting a joint naval drill (Sea Breeze), with the assistance of the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) jets in the Indian state of Goa.

[Nervous Saudis try to ease Middle East tensions](#)

January 9, 2020, The Guardian

Saudi Arabia has sent a message to Washington and London that it wants to see a de-escalation of the United States' struggle with Iran, in a sign that Saudi is nervous about its vulnerability to Iranian missile strikes – and still uncertain about the reliability of Donald Trump's long-term commitment to his Gulf allies.

[Russia announces ceasefire deal with Turkey in Syria's Idlib](#)

January 10, 2020, Al Jazeera

Russia and Turkey have announced a ceasefire in Syria's Idlib province, paving the way for a pause in continuing government-led bombardment in the country's last rebel-held stronghold, while allowing the delivery of humanitarian aid.

[Lebanon slaps travel ban on Ghosn](#)

January 9, 2020, Al Jazeera

A top Lebanese judge has issued a travel ban on former Nissan CEO-turned-international fugitive Carlos Ghosn over a non-binding Interpol arrest warrant relating to charges of financial misconduct that Ghosn is facing in Japan.

United States

United States

[Trump Backs Away from Further Military Conflict with Iran](#)

January 8, 2020, New York Times

President Trump backed away from further military action against Iran and called for renewed diplomacy on Wednesday as the bristling confrontation of the past six days eased in the aftermath of an Iranian missile strike that seemed intended to save face rather than inflict casualties.

[Iranian foreign minister accuses US of 'state terrorism' as country's parliament votes to designate US forces as 'terrorists'](#)

January 7, 2020, CNN

Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif called US President Donald Trump's decision to order the drone strike that killed the country's top military commander an act of "state terrorism" in an interview with CNN Tuesday.

[Iran sends mixed signals as tensions with US ease](#)

January 9, 2020, Associated Press

Iran sent mixed signals Thursday as tensions with the U.S. appeared to ease, with President Hassan Rouhani warning of a "very dangerous response" if the U.S. makes "another mistake" and a senior commander vowing "harsher revenge" for the killing of a top Iranian general.

['NATO plus ME': Trump proposes NATO expansion into Middle East](#)

January 9, 2020, Politico

President Donald Trump on Thursday proposed expanding NATO's membership to include Middle Eastern nations in light of recent U.S. tensions in the region with Iran.

[Trump, in a raucous rally, takes on Democrats and touts Soleimani killing](#)

January 9, 2020, Politico

President Donald Trump moved into re-election mode on Thursday with a boisterous rally in Ohio in which he blasted Democrats for trying to oust him just as he ordered the killing of two foreign fighters, he called the biggest "monsters" on the planet.

[U.S. House votes to rein in Trump's war powers as U.S.-Iran tensions stay high](#)

January 9, 2020, Reuters

The U.S. House of Representatives voted on Thursday to stop President Donald Trump from further military action against Iran as the Middle East remained tense after the U.S. killing of a top Iranian commander and Iran's retaliatory missile strikes.

[Iran missile shot down Ukraine-bound Boeing airliner, officials say](#)

January 9, 2020, CNBC

Spy satellite imagery suggests that a Ukraine-bound Boeing airliner that crashed shortly after take-off in Iran was shot down by an Iranian missile, killing all 176 people aboard.

[Investors are feeling a lot calmer today about the United States and Iran](#)

January 9, 2020, CNN

Markets are continuing to climb after US President Donald Trump allayed investor worries over further escalation of tensions between the United States and Iran.

[U.S. job growth seen slowing in December after robust gains](#)

January 10, 2020, Reuters

U.S. job growth likely slowed in December, but the pace of hiring probably remains more than enough to keep the longest economic expansion in history on track despite a deepening downturn in a manufacturing sector stung by trade disputes.

[Trump says China trade deal may be signed shortly after January 15](#)

January 10, 2020, Reuters

U.S. President Donald Trump, who announced last month that the Phase 1 trade deal with China would be signed on Jan. 15, said on Thursday the agreement could be signed "shortly thereafter."

[Don't want India to degrade its defence capabilities, says US on CAATSA and S-400 deal](#)

January 9, 2020, The Print

The Trump administration does not want to make a decision that degrades the defence capabilities of India which is its 'Major Defence Partner', a senior US official has said, referring to the potential sanctions under CAATSA which prohibits countries from purchasing significant military equipment from Russia.

[The Middle East Is More Stable When the United States Stays Away](#)

January 6, 2020, Foreign Policy

As the assassination of Suleimani shows, it might be Washington that is the main spoiler in the region.

Europe & Russia

Europe

[MPs back EU exit deal, turning page on Brexit crisis](#)

January 9, 2020, Reuters

Lawmakers approved legislation on Thursday which will allow Britain to leave the European Union on Jan. 31 with an exit deal, ending more than three years of tumult over the terms of the unprecedented divorce.

[Northern Ireland's DUP backs deal to restore devolved government](#)

January 9, 2020, Reuters

Northern Ireland's largest pro-British party, the Democratic Unionist Party, said it believed the draft deal published by the British and Irish governments on Thursday provided a basis upon which the regional assembly can be re-established.

[EU's Barnier Says a Year Not Enough to Agree Full Deal With UK](#)

January 9, 2020, The New York Times

A comprehensive agreement on the future relationship between the European Union and Britain will take longer than the 11-month transition period that begins when the UK leaves the EU on Jan. 31, the EU's chief negotiator said on Thursday.

[Prince Harry and Meghan to step back from royal family](#)

January 8, 2020, The Guardian

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex are to step back from senior roles in the royal family and work towards financial self-sufficiency after a period marked by open warfare with the media over claimed intrusion and bullying.

[Duke and Duchess of Sussex 'defied Queen' over statement release](#)

January 9, 2020, The Guardian

The Queen, Prince of Wales and Duke of Cambridge have instructed their senior aides to work with the UK and Canadian governments to help carve out new roles for the Duke and Duchess of Sussex within "days not weeks".

[Spain refuses immunity for Catalan separatist MEP Junqueras](#)

January 9, 2020, Deutsche Welle

Spain's Supreme Court on Thursday said that Oriol Junqueras should not be released from prison, denying him immunity as a Member of the European Parliament (MEP).

[Tens of thousands march in Paris against Macron's pension reforms](#)

January 9, 2020, EuroNews

452,000 protesters hit the streets in France to continue their opposition to proposed pension reforms, according to the French Ministry of the Interior.

[At the Heart of France's Long Strikes, a Fight Between Haves and Have-Nots](#)

January 9, 2020, The New York Times

A protest over President Emmanuel Macron's pension overhaul, now in its sixth week, is amplified by 200 years of French history.

[Turkey in talks to establish schools in Germany](#)

January 10, 2020, Deutsche Welle

The governments of the respective nations are negotiating an agreement that will create Turkish schools in the EU's largest country. Under the new proposals, they would be located in Berlin, Cologne and Frankfurt.

[Germany's Merkel Heads to Moscow Amid Heightened Global Tensions](#)

January 9, 2020, VOA

German Chancellor Angela Merkel is due to travel to Moscow Saturday for talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The meeting will likely focus on the Iran crisis, with both Germany and Russia calling for de-escalation.

[India adds checks to rice exports to European Union](#)

January 9, 2020, Economic Times

The commerce and industry ministry on Thursday amended the export policy for Basmati and non-Basmati rice from 'free' to outbound shipments subject to certificates issued by Export Inspection Council (EIC)

[Indian cabinet okays mobility pact with France to boost people-to-people contacts](#)

January 9, 2020, LiveMint

Skilled workers, students and academics from India and France could soon be able to live and work in each other's countries. The proposed mobility pact between the two nations on Wednesday received the approval of the Indian cabinet.

Russia

[Multipolarity in Practice: Understanding Russia's Engagement With Regional Institutions](#)

January 8, 2020, Carnegie

Over the past two decades, and especially since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014, the Kremlin has intensified its engagement with international institutions. This paper evaluates the drivers of this involvement, Russian views of three of these organizations, and Moscow's success in achieving its objectives.

[US House passes measure that would limit Trump's military action against Iran](#)

January 10, 2020, Tass

The US House of Representatives has adopted a war powers resolution on Thursday that would limit President Donald Trump's military actions against Iran. The session was broadcast on the official website of the House.

[Tehran refutes allegations that Ukrainian plane was downed by Iranian missile](#)

January 10, 2020, The Moscow Times

Tehran condemns the statements made by the United States and other countries that the Ukraine International Airlines plane was allegedly downed by an Iranian missile.

[Libyan National Army lauds Russian-Turkish ceasefire initiative](#)

January 10, 2020

Following a meeting in Istanbul, Russian and Turkish presidents called on all parties in the Libyan conflict to put a hold on all hostilities and introduce a ceasefire starting at midnight on January 12.

[Lawmakers Ask Pro-Russian Leader in Breakaway Georgian Region to Resign After Protests](#)

January 10, 2020, The Moscow Times

A local legislature appealed on Thursday to the leader of the breakaway Georgian region of Abkhazia to stand down as crowds of demonstrators were contesting election results, Russian state media reported.

[Ukraine Looking for Russian-Made Missile in Iran Plane Crash, Official Says](#)

January 9, 2020

Ukraine wants to scour the crash site of its airliner for possible Russian-made missile debris, officials said Thursday as an initial report by Iranian investigators said the plane had been on fire immediately before it crashed.

[Russia's Role in Syria is Changing](#)

January 10, 2020, The Moscow Times

Moscow might face difficulties in promoting its vision of a political settlement, while competition with Tehran is growing.

[Putin Now Needs a Plan B on Iran](#)

January 7, 2020, The Moscow Times

Iranian General Qassem Soleimani, killed last week by a U.S. drone in Baghdad, has been credited with persuading Russian President Vladimir Putin to intervene militarily in Syria in 2015, a claim the Kremlin denies. Regardless of the truth of that particular story, though, the inevitable escalation following Soleimani's death has the potential to change Putin's calculus in the region.

[The Iran Crisis Can Be a Boost for Russia](#)

January 8, 2020, The Moscow Times

The first was the assassination of the Iranian general Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad in a U.S drone strike on Jan. 3. The second is the sending of Turkish troops to Libya. It is getting increasingly difficult for Russia to maintain the balance of power between its partners in the Middle East, but Moscow has no intention of losing its hard-won reputation as the key power-broker in the region.

Africa & Latin America

Latin America

[Inequality triggered protests across Latin America](#)

January 8, 2020, World Economic Forum

The pervasive protests, financial instability, and economic stagnation taking place from the Gulf of Mexico down to the Argentinean Patagonia in the last quarter of 2019, have brought back fearful memories of the 1980s.

[Argentina's Fernandez: social pact may help with IMF negotiations](#)

January 3, 2020, Al Jazeera

Argentina's new President Alberto Fernandez said on Thursday that a social pact with businesses and trade unions sent a "strong message" to creditors, including the International Monetary Fund, that the economy must be allowed to grow before the country can pay its debts.

[Morales: US aid to Bolivia in 2020 proves role in coup](#)

January 8, 2020, Andolou Agency

Bolivia's former President Evo Morales said Wednesday the recently announced the U.S. assistance to the interim government of Jeanine Anez in 2020 proves Washington's involvement in his ouster.

[Mexico Pays ₹7108.62 crore to Hedge Its 2020 Oil Exports](#)

January 10, 2020, Bloomberg

Mexico paid ₹7108.62 crore to protect its 2020 oil exports against steep price fluctuations, Finance Minister Arturo Herrera said Thursday.

[Venezuela opposition leader Guaido takes new oath amid standoff](#)

January 8, 2020, Al Jazeera

Venezuela's opposition leader Juan Guaido has again been sworn in as head of the opposition-controlled National Assembly amid a showdown for control of the parliament after his former opposition ally Luis Parra was sworn in as the rival congressional chief.

Africa

[East Libya forces to press campaign against Tripoli rivals despite ceasefire call](#)

January 10, 2020, Reuters

Forces in East Libya led by Khalifa Haftar said on Thursday they will not let up in their military campaign against rival factions in the capital Tripoli, appearing to reject a call by Russia and Turkey for a ceasefire.

[UN special envoy 'angry' at foreign meddling in Libya](#)

January 7, 2020, Al Jazeera

UN special envoy 'angry' at foreign meddlingThe United Nations special envoy to Libya on Monday said he was "angry" at foreign interference in the war-torn country, as the Security Council expressed concern at the recent escalation in fighting in Libya.

[Shadows of war in Libya](#)

January 9, 2020, Ahram Online

Turkey's direct confrontation with the region's strongest army and largest navy will not only carry terrible repercussions on the Libyan front. It will also mean that Turkey will lose commercial access to the Suez Canal, as Egypt will prevent Turkish vessels from crossing the waterway under the 1888 Convention of Constantinople that entitles Egypt to close the Suez Canal to any hostile country.

[South Africa's ANC to mark 108th anniversary amid blackouts](#)

January 10, 2020, Al Jazeera

The power is off, again, in South Africa six years after the first major consumer crisis of the state-owned power company, Eskom. Despite the many challenges facing the nation, the ANC is eager to spread a message of hope this Saturday. "We are going to look at the weaknesses and shortcomings. That's why we will give South Africans hope that things will be better tomorrow," ANC's Secretary-General Ace Magashule said to the media.

['Unprecedented terrorist violence' in West Africa, Sahel region](#)

January 8, 2020, UN News

"The region has experienced a devastating surge in terrorist attacks against civilian and military targets," Mohamed Ibn Chambas, UN Special Representative and Head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), told the Council in its first formal meeting of the year.

[US sanctions South Sudanese VP for role in abuse](#)

January 8, 2020, Andolou Agency

The U.S. Treasury Department on Wednesday sanctioned the first Vice President of South Sudan Taban Deng Gai for his alleged involvement in human rights abuses.

[A Growing Challenge for America's Somalia Policy](#)

January 9, 2020, The Daily Signal

Al-Shabaab operates primarily in Somalia. It rose to prominence in 2006, and at one point controlled swathes of the country. But its frequent attacks against neighboring states prompted an offensive by the multinational peacekeeping force, the African Union Mission in Somalia, which drove al-Shabaab from most of its strongholds.

[AFRICOM Sends Top Brass to Kenya to Investigate al-Shabab Attack](#)

January 9, 2020, VOA

The commander of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) has ordered an investigation into the al-Shabab attack this week that killed three Americans, dispatching two of his top generals Thursday to Manda Bay, Kenya.

[An attack on American forces in Kenya raises questions and concerns](#)

January 10, 2020, The Economist

But talk of an alliance between al-Shabab and Iran is probably just that

Across Manda Bay, on the mainland, fighters from al-Shabab, a Somali jihadist group, were engaged in an unusually daring assault on American forces stationed at a Kenyan airbase. The attack, which lasted several hours, was startlingly effective. The lightly armed jihadists—probably no more than 15 of them—managed to kill three Americans (one soldier and two security contractors) and wreck six aircraft, some used by America's armed forces for snooping missions across the Somali border. Never before had al-Shabab targeted a facility housing American troops outside Somalia.

[Liberia discontent: More anti-government protests expected](#)

January 6, 2020, Al Jazeera

Liberia is bracing for another round of anti-government protests, the third since former football star George Weah took over as president.



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

www.delhipolicygroup.org