

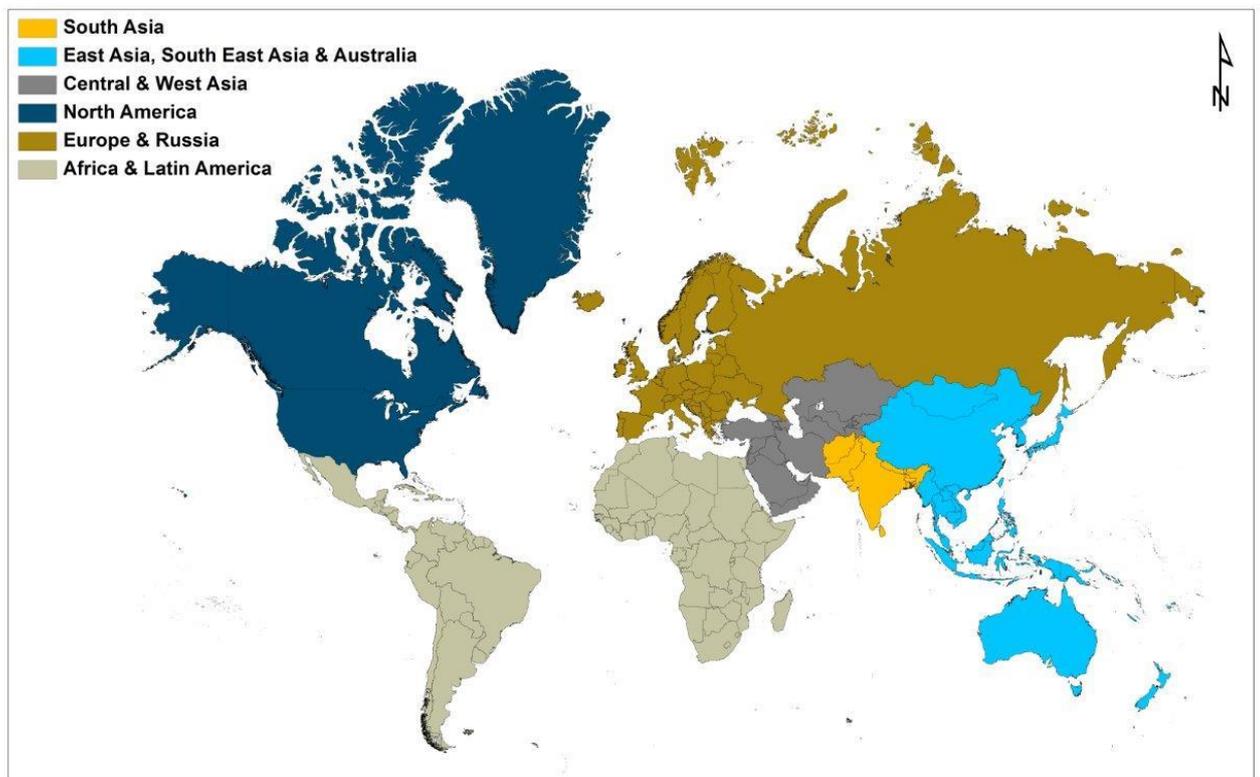


# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



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Delhi Policy Group

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

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Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

## DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH Volume 4, Issue 43

### ABOUT US

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

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

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

### DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

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## South Asia

### India

[America's Pompeo to visit India next week for strategic talks with Rajnath and Jaishankar](#)

October 21, 2020, The Economic Times

India and the US will hold their third edition of 2+2 ministerial dialogue here on October 27 during which the sides are expected to explore ways to further strengthen defence, security and global strategic ties including in the Indo-Pacific region.

[Defence pact with India on geospatial information sharing in the works: US](#)

October 23, 2020, Hindustan Times

The United States said Basic Exchange and Communication Agreement (BECA), a defence pact on the sharing of geospatial information, is "in the works" at the upcoming 2+2 ministerial dialogue next week with India.

[LAC standoff: Amid Xi Jinping's war cry, Amit Shah says India's defence forces always ready](#)

October 18, 2020, Times Now

Amid the ongoing tensions with China in eastern Ladakh, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said that India's defence forces are always prepared for the war and assured that government is committed to protecting country's sovereignty and border.

[LAC stand-off: India rejects China's demand, but talks on](#)

As India and China maintain stable but confrontational positions in eastern Ladakh, the external affairs ministry on Thursday said that "the immediate task is to ensure a comprehensive disengagement of troops in all the friction areas.

[India hands back PLA soldier who strayed across contested LAC in Ladakh to China](#)

October 21, 2020, Hindustan Times

A People's Liberation Army soldier, who was caught by the Indian army for straying across the contested Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, was on Tuesday handed back to China at the Chushul Moldo meeting point, officials said.

### [100 km tunneling planned for LAC and LoC: All weather road connectivity for Ladakh](#)

October 20, 2020, India Today

China's irritation over India's rapid infrastructure development close to the borders has not stopped New Delhi from bolstering its road connectivity.

### [For now, India has no plans to launch trade talks with Taiwan](#)

October 22, 2020, The Economic Times

Indian currently has no plans to launch talks with Taiwan for a trade deal contrary to speculations that Delhi may launch trade dialogue with Taipei that drew sharp reaction from China.

### [Chinese media meant to threaten India, ends up confessing role in northeast](#)

October 22, 2020, Hindustan Times

An ambush in Arunachal Pradesh's Tirap sector that led to the death of an Assam Rifles soldier on Tuesday has put the spotlight back on China's role to fuel insurgency in the northeast. Tuesday's attack by the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah) came a week after China's propaganda arm warned the Narendra Modi government against signing a much-speculated trade pact with Taiwan, threatening that Beijing could retaliate by supporting North-East separatists and stop recognising Sikkim as a part of India.

## **Pakistan**

### [Need stressed for boosting Pak-Iran economic cooperation](#)

October 22, 2020, Dawn

Presiding over the concluding session the 8th Pak-Iran Joint Border Trade Committee meeting Balochistan Governor said that people of both countries were enjoying cordial and close relations, adding the decisions taken by the committee would be implemented for enhancing bilateral trade. The meeting decided to take steps for discouraging entry of illegal immigrants in Iran and stopping drug smuggling.

### [Four NATO vehicles, two trailers torched in Bara](#)

October 17, 2020, Dawn

Unidentified armed men torched NATO's four Humvee military trucks along with two trailers in Bara tehsil of Khyber tribal district. Police officials said that three men riding motorcycles intercepted the trailers at gun point on Frontier Road in Bara around midday and torched four Humvee vehicles mounted on the trailers.

### [Army chief orders probe into 'Karachi incident'](#)

October 20, 2020, The Express Tribune

Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa has ordered an inquiry into the 'Karachi incident' -- events that led to registration of a first information report (FIR) against PML-N's Captain (retd) Muhammad Safdar and his subsequent arrest during a visit to Sindh provincial capital. The development came after PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, while addressing a news conference, requested the army chief and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Director General Lt Gen Faiz Hameed to investigate how the Sindh police chief was pressured into registering a case against the PML-N leader.

### [At least 15 dead in stampede near Pakistan consulate in eastern Afghanistan](#)

October 21, 2020, Dawn

At least 15 people were killed in stampede among thousands of Afghans gathered outside Pakistan's consulate as jostling broke out between people applying for visas, officials in the eastern city of Jalalabad said. An estimated 3,000 Afghans had congregated on the open ground outside the consulate, waiting to collect tokens needed to apply for a visa. Pakistan's Ambassador to Afghanistan Mansoor Ahmad Khan said that he was "deeply saddened" at the casualties reported.

### [Pak foreign debt jacks up to \\$113 bn: State Bank](#)

October 20, 2020, The News

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said the foreign debt was \$96 billion in 2018 and the incumbent government took \$17 billion foreign loan, jacking up the debt liability of Pakistan to \$113 billion on June 30, 2020.

Afghanistan

### [Taliban Blames US Forces for Violating Doha Agreement](#)

October 18, 2020, Tolo News

The Taliban has blamed the United States forces in Afghanistan for violating the deal the two sides signed in Doha back in February, something that critics say will further complicate the ongoing peace efforts in the war-hit country. The group issued a statement, saying that US forces--in contravention of the peace deal have bombed non-conflict zones in Helmand, Farah and a few other provinces.

### [Abdullah Meets Iranian FM Zarif, Discusses Afghan Peace](#)

October 18, 2020, Tolo News

Abdullah Abdullah, the chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, travelled to Iran on October 18 and met with Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and discussed the Afghan peace process. In this meeting, Zarif said that a stable, developed and peaceful Afghanistan has been Iran's constant hope, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said.

### [US pullout, non-aligned govt only durable solution: Hekmatyar](#)

October 22, 2020, Dawn

The only durable solution for peace in Afghanistan is withdrawal of US troops and formation of a non-aligned, independent and sovereign government by Afghans in light of their beliefs and traditions without outside interference, Afghan politician and Hizb-i-Islami leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar said. Otherwise, he warned, the country would plunge into another civil war.

### [Afghan Vice President Takes Charge of Capital Amid Rise In Crime](#)

October 17, 2020, RFERL

Afghan Vice President Amrullah Saleh has been put in charge of the security situation in the capital amid a rise in crime that has caused an outcry among residents. Saleh said October 16 that he would take responsibility for security in the city for "a few weeks," adding that he would show no mercy to criminals.

### [Afghan, Uzbek Officials Meet in Kabul, Sign Agreements](#)

October 20, 2020, Tolo News

Sardor Umurzakov, Uzbekistan's deputy prime minister and minister of Investments and foreign trade, visited Kabul on October 20 and met with President Ashraf Ghani and other Afghan officials. In his meeting with Ghani, Umurzakov said his country supports the peace process and the Afghan government's plans, the Palace said in a statement. The two sides discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral, economic and trade ties as well as cultural cooperation between the two countries.

### [Fraud, Waste and Abuse Cost US \\$19B in Afghanistan: SIGAR](#)

October 22, 2020, Tolo News

Nearly \$19 billion of US money was lost in more than a decade of war in Afghanistan to fraud, waste and abuse, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction's (SIGAR) said in a new report. As of Dec 2019, the US Congress appropriated nearly \$134 billion since Fiscal Year 2002 for Afghanistan reconstruction. Of that amount, SIGAR reviewed approx. \$63

billion and found that nearly \$19 billion of amount reviewed was lost to waste, fraud, and abuse, the report said.

### [Afghan air strike hits religious school, officials say, after Taliban attacks](#)

October 22, 2020, Reuters

An Afghan military air strike targeting Taliban fighters killed at least 12 people, including children, and wounded 14 in an attack that hit a religious school in the northeastern province of Takhar. Hadi Jamal, an Afghan military spokesman, confirmed the air strike on October 21, but said it was “not clear if the attack had accidentally killed civilians and children” and that an investigation had been launched.

Bangladesh

### [Bangladesh's rise is an opportunity for India, but is overshadowed by negative domestic politics](#)

October 20, 2020, The Indian Express

In using Dhaka's impressive economic performance to attack Delhi's, India is missing the bigger story about the strategic consequences of Bangladesh's economic rise.

### [Is India slipping behind? Bangladesh reveals India's challenged pre-eminence in the Bay of Bengal](#)

October 21, 2020, The Times of India

News that the GDP per capita – \$1,887.97 – of Bangladesh, which was created out of a civil war with Pakistan with India's help in 1971, will edge past India's \$1,876.53, is a reason to ask the BJP government this inconvenient question. All the more so since small, neighbouring Sri Lanka's GDP per capita – around \$ 4,000 – is already twice that of India.

### [From termites to tiger: India's Bangladesh neuroses](#)

October 23, 2020, Dhaka Tribune

The IMF projected that India's economy would contract by at least 10% this year, which is the most entrenched trough of any emerging country. At the same time, Bangladesh's economy will grow by 4% and, for the first time, its real capita GDP will surpass that of its giant neighbour. This means that, in just under five decades, Bangladesh has leapfrogged from poorest country in the world right ahead to the South Asian standings.

### [Bangladesh will attend Colombo Plan meeting](#)

October 23, 2020 The Daily Star

Bangladesh will attend the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee meeting in New Delhi on October 30 as an observer. This decision to seat the newborn nation as an observer is taken by the Colombo Plan Secretariat after an overwhelming number of the 24 member nations extended their consent to the proposal. Bangladesh is already a member of the Commonwealth, a permanent invitee as an observer at the United Nations and an observer to such world bodies as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

### **Nepal**

#### [Nepal-China agreements are stuck](#)

October 19, 2020, Nepali Times

After the 2015 Indian blockade, the Nepal government tried to diversify trade and access to the sea through China. But five years later, inertia and disinterest in Kathmandu have stalled a raft of bilateral agreements signed with the northern neighbour.

#### [Amid Rising Big Power Tensions, Nepal Seeks a New Foreign Policy](#)

October 19, 2020, The Diplomat

Kathmandu will have to balance Beijing, New Delhi, and Washington as it seeks a new way forward to advance national interest.

#### [India Opens Border with Nepal After Seven Months, Kathmandu Does Not Reciprocate](#)

October 22, 2020, India.com

India opened its border with Nepal after nearly seven months, but the neighbouring nation did not follow suit. Also Read - LAC Standoff: India Tightens Security on Borders; Puts ITBP & SSB on High Alert Amid Tensions With China.

#### [RAW chief meets Nepal PM Oli, says India won't allow interruption in bilateral relations](#)

October 22, 2020, The Print

Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) chief Samant Kumar Goel paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and said India will not allow interruption

in the friendly bilateral relations with Nepal and resolve all outstanding issues through dialogue, according to a top Nepalese official.

## **Bhutan**

### [Celebrating India-Bhutan ties: The Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Power Project receives prestigious award](#)

October 21, 2020, Financial Express

The Mangdechhu Hydroelectric project which is a success story of India Bhutan cooperation in the Hydropower sector has recently won the prestigious Brunel Medal-2020. With the coming on stream of the India-Bhutan Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Power Project, the jointly created generation capacity by India in Bhutan has crossed 2000 MW.

## **Sri Lanka**

### [US confirms Pompeo will visit Sri Lanka for talks](#)

October 21, 2020, Colombo Gazette

US Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo will travel to New Delhi, India; Colombo, Sri Lanka; Malé, Maldives; and Jakarta, Indonesia October 25 – 30, the US State Department announced.

### [Pompeo urges Sri Lanka to make difficult decisions regarding China](#)

October 23, 2020, Hindustan Times

During his Asia trip from October 25 to 30, US State Department Secretary Michael Pompeo will be urging the Sri Lankan officials to make decisions about its relationship with China and to review the option that the United States offers for transparent and sustainable economic development, an official said.

### [India and Sri Lanka Complete Bilateral Naval Exercise](#)

October 21, 2020, The Diplomat

The latest iteration comes amid Indian concerns around Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean – and China's foothold in Sri Lanka.

### [Sri Lanka assisting UK authorities in case on LTTE ban](#)

October 22, 2020, Colombo Gazette

The Government of Sri Lanka is assisting the UK Government in the case over the ban on the LTTE. The Foreign Ministry said that Sri Lanka has been made aware of the Open Judgement by the Proscribed Organizations Appeals Commission (POAC) of the United Kingdom dated 21 October 2020.

### [Dual citizenship clause of 20th Amendment passed](#)

October 22, 2020, Colombo Gazette

The dual citizenship clause of the 20th Amendment to the Constitution was passed in Parliament. The clause was passed after the opposition sought a vote during the committee stage of the debate on the 20th Amendment to the Constitution in Parliament.

## East & South East Asia

### China

#### [Warning to Indian elites: 'Taiwan card' wrong play](#)

October 22, 2020, Global Times

News emerged recently that India was considering trade talks with the island of Taiwan. This has triggered objections from China, with Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Li Jian saying that, "China is firmly opposed to any official exchanges of any form and the signing of any agreement of official nature between Taiwan and any country having diplomatic relations with China."

#### [China has no reason to fear US suppression: Global Times editorial](#)

October 22, 2020, Global Times

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) entering the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to fight the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea. Chinese society recently has held grand commemorations of the war breaking out shortly after the founding of People's Republic of China (PRC) to honor heroes and martyrs.

#### [Idea of boycotting Beijing Winter Games exposes Australia's narrow-mindedness](#)

October 22, 2020, Global Times

Whether Australia should boycott the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics is causing a debate in the country. It's reported that next month, the Australian Senate will deliberate on Australia's participation. Earlier this month, independent senator for South Australia Rex Patrick called on the Australian government to work with the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) to ensure that Australia boycotts the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, citing alleged human rights abuses in China. After his proposed boycott was shot down by the AOC, he criticized AOC President John Coates of holding "an antiquated and self-serving vision of international sports," claiming "human rights must come ahead of sports."

#### [US' final presidential debate shouldn't strangle possibility of China-US cooperation in COVID-19 fight](#)

October 22, 2020, Global Times

The second and final presidential debate before the 2020 US election, between Republican President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden, will be held night US time. The first debate was so "hostile" and "chaotic" that the

mute button introduced by the debate commission has become a hot subject for media outlets on the eve of the debate.

### [New US allies plan spins China and Russia threats to stay afloat](#)

October 21, 2020, Global Times

US Secretary of Defense Mark Esper revealed a new initiative to strengthen and expand US alliances with "like-minded democracies" to counter Russia and China, according to AFP. The initiative, called the Guidance for Development for Alliances and Partnerships, is a comprehensive approach to strengthen alliances and build partnerships, Esper said when speaking at the Atlantic Council in Washington, DC.

### [New Delhi can't woo nearby South Asia, oceans apart Washington won't either](#)

October 22, 2020, Global Times

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will visit Sri Lanka and the Maldives later this month, officials of the two countries said. The purpose of Pompeo's visit to the two Indian Ocean nations is abundantly clear - to promote the Indo-Pacific Strategy that the US has been vigorously promoting and to advance US' geostrategic interests. Containing China is the focus of this campaign. Based on Pompeo's speeches from his previous diplomatic trips to Europe and Latin America, he will surely seek to smear China. His purpose is obvious: To further forge global anti-China public opinion.

### [QUAD members fight for interests with each other: Global Times editorial](#)

October 10, 2020, Global Times

The Indian Ministry of Defense announced that Australia has been invited to participate in the Exercise Malabar 2020 in the Bay of Bengal later this year. That the US, India, Japan, and Australia will take part in the drill is widely considered to be the latest update of the QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) alliance.

### [Malabar drill exposes India's oceanic ambitions](#)

October 20, 2020, Global Times

The Exercise Malabar 2020 will witness the participation of all four QUAD countries - the US, Japan, Australia and India. This piece of news came when New Delhi announced that it had invited Canberra to participate, with the latter immediately affirming it would join.

### [South Asian nations not convinced by empty US promises](#)

October 19, 2020, Global Times

US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen E. Biegun met with senior Bangladesh government officials during his trip to Dhaka, Bangladesh. The visit is viewed

as part of Washington's attempt to raise its visibility in South Asia. However, US' new South Asia strategy has some difficult issues, such as India-Pakistan relations. As is well known, US-Pakistan relations are perennially tumultuous, frequently tortured, and tenuous at best - especially over the last decade. When Washington and Islamabad do agree, New Delhi gets jealous.

#### [Sweden will pay price for biased decision: China Daily editorial](#)

October 22, 2020, China Daily

National security was again cited as the pretext when Sweden telecom authorities announced that equipment from Huawei and ZTE will be banned from its 5G networks, and equipment from the two Chinese companies already installed will be removed by the year 2025.

#### [Commentary: U.S. politicians' attempt to build anti-China alliance faces dead end](#)

October 22, 2020, Xinhua

Certain politicians in the United States have recently escalated their rhetoric advocating an anti-China alliance. They have seemingly ignored how a similar strategic mistake was made 70 years ago: overestimating their ability to counter China and underestimating China's determination to safeguard its core interests. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has been traveling around the world, selling his anti-China ideas and denigrating China's normal cooperation with other countries. U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper revealed a new initiative to strengthen and expand U.S. alliances with "like-minded democracies" to encircle China. White House national security official Robert O'Brien slandered China by casting it as a rival seeking to "monopolize every industry" of the 21st century.

#### [China Deserves a Day in Court](#)

October 19, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

As Donald Trump and Joe Biden debate how to deal with malign Chinese behavior, Beijing's National Bureau of Statistics reports its economy has largely recovered from the Covid-19 pandemic, growing 4.9% year-on-year in the third quarter. Meanwhile American class-action lawyers and the attorneys general of Mississippi and Missouri are suing the Chinese government over the novel coronavirus. Plaintiffs accuse Beijing of various forms of misconduct, ranging from negligence in handling the original infections in Wuhan to the reckless operation of biolabs and even perpetrating bioterrorism against the U.S.

### [In Xi Jinping's China, Nationalism Takes a Dark Turn](#)

October 22, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

The wave of nationalism sweeping through China, amplified by party propaganda, the political ambitions of Xi Jinping and the country's success in containing Covid-19, is taking a darker turn, with echoes of the country's Maoist past. Angry mobs online have swarmed any criticism of China's leaders or a perceived lack of loyalty to the country. Targets are being harassed and silenced. Some have lost their jobs.

### [Banks in Hong Kong advised to report security law breaches to police](#)

October 20, 2020, Financial Times

Banks in Hong Kong have been advised to report any transactions suspected of violating a controversial national security law to police, according to a document released online by the city's regulator. Albert Ho, a pro-democracy politician, said he had already received more inquiries from his bank about his account since the security law was enacted. He said he feared that the reporting system in the document handed police "enormous power to investigate" government critics.

Japan

### [Japan's Suga opposes actions that boost tension in South China Sea](#)

October 21, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

Japan opposes any actions that escalate tension in the East and South China Seas, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said as he wrapped up a trip to Vietnam and Indonesia, but he added Tokyo was not aiming at an "Asian NATO" to contain any specific country.

### [Chinese fishing boats swarming into Japan's EEZ fishing ground](#)

October 21, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

The Fisheries Agency moved to secure the safety of Japanese fishing boats operating in the rich Yamatotai fishing grounds within the nation's exclusive economic zone by requesting they avoid certain areas and go elsewhere due to a recent surge in Chinese vessels moving in.

### [Beijing blasts Suga over free, open Indo-Pacific region push](#)

October 22, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga refrained from mentioning China when he pushed for a free and open Indo-Pacific region, but Beijing still criticized the Japanese leader in his first official overseas trip.

### [Japan, Britain sign free trade deal for post-Brexit era](#)

October 23, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

Japan and Britain signed a bilateral free trade deal in the first such major post-Brexit deal, reducing tariffs on Yorkshire lamb sold in Japan, as well as auto parts for Japan's Nissan plant.

## **Korea**

### [Police Breaks THAAD Blockade](#)

October 23, 2020, The Chosun Ilbo

There were violent scenes as police dispersed protesters to let heavy trucks take construction equipment into a base where the U.S. has deployed a Terminal High-Altitude Area Defence battery.

### [US on the same page with South Korea over end-of-war declaration](#)

October 22, 2020, The Korea Times

South Korea and the U.S. have appeared to be at odds over President Moon Jae-in's proposal for a declaration to end the 1950-53 Korean War, made during his speech at the United Nations General Assembly.

### [North Korean leader pays respects to fallen Chinese soldiers](#)

October 22, 2020, The Korea Times

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un visited the cemetery of Chinese soldiers who fell during the 1950-53 Korean War to mark the anniversary of their participation in the conflict, state media said.

### [Biden says will meet NK leader if he agrees to draw down nuclear capacity](#)

October 23, 2020, The Korea Herald

US Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden said he would meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un only on the condition that the latter agrees to reduce his country's nuclear capabilities.

### [S. Korea to keep seeking dialogue with N. Korea over slain official: minister](#)

October 23, 2020, The Korea Herald

Unification Minister Lee In-young said that South Korea will keep seeking "dialogue" with North Korea to figure out exactly what happened to a South Korean official shot and killed by the North.

## **Southeast Asia**

### [China Ranks 4th Largest Trading Partner for Brunei In 2019](#)

October 17 , 2020, Xinhua Net

China was Brunei's fourth-largest trading partner in 2019, with trade flow amounting to 1.5 billion Brunei dollars (1.1 billion U.S. dollars), or 8.9 percent of Brunei's total trade, Haji Mohd Amin Liew, Brunei's Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister of Finance and Economy said.

### [Vietnam Moves Up in Asia Power Index](#)

October 19, 2020, Vietnam lus

Vietnam moved up one spot to rank 12th out of 26 countries and territories in the 2020 Asia Power Index conducted by the Lowy Institute, an independent think-tank in Australia.

### [Japan, Vietnam Join Hands on South China Sea](#)

October 19, 2020, Andolou Agency

Japan and Vietnam agreed to join hands and cooperate on regional issues, including disputed South China Sea, local media reported. Speaking to reporters along with his Vietnamese counterpart Nguyen Xuan Phuc in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga called Vietnam a "cornerstone" of efforts to realize a "free and open Indo-Pacific" and vowed Japan's continued contribution to "peace and prosperity in the region".

### [Myanmar Navy Showcases Newly Acquired Submarine In Fleet Exercise Bandoola](#)

October 19, 2020, Janes.com

The Myanmar Navy – Tamadaw Yay – has publicly displayed its lone submarine at its ongoing Fleet Exercise 2020 (Exercise 'Bandoola'), which kicked off on 15 October. The highlight of the exercise, which featured at least 12 naval vessels, was the Project 877 EKM submarine UMS Minye Theinkhathu ( Min ye Thein Kha Thu ), which was formerly the Indian submarine INS Sindhuvir .

### [Ph Navy Says It's Ready for Security Role In Resumption Of Oil Hunt In West Philippine Sea](#)

October 19, 2020, Inquirer.net

The Philippine Navy would play a key security role in the resumption of oil exploration by Philippine companies in the resource-rich West Philippine Sea.

### [Fresh Wave of Chinese Diplomacy Bolsters Resistance to US in Southeast Asia](#)

October 19, 2020, VOA News,

China scored points in Southeast Asia against the United States, a rival superpower trying to curtail Chinese influence abroad, through a slate of ministerial visits last week, analysts in the region believe.

### [US, Indonesia Agree to Enhance Military, Maritime Security Ties](#)

October 19, 2002, The Jakarta Post

The United States and Indonesia have agreed to tighten defense and maritime security cooperation between the two countries after a meeting between US Defense Secretary Mark Esper and Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto in Washington, DC.

### [Japan ramping up pressure on China over South China Sea: Report](#)

October 22, 2020, Times Now

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga agreed with his Vietnamese counterpart Nguyen Xuan Phuc to cooperate on regional issues including the disputed South China Sea (SCS).

### [ASEAN at crossroads: NAM has no alternative](#)

October 23, 2020, The Jakarta Post

As the present world order weakens, the mega confrontations have appeared more likely: On its post-Soviet revival quest, Russia becomes increasingly assertive in Euro-Mediterranean theatre and beyond. The Sino-American relations are increasingly adversarial, with escalating frictions over trade, advanced technology, human rights, and global strategic influence. Currently, both sides – as president of the United States Council of Foreign Relations Richard Haass states “are developing scenarios for a possible war”.

### [India-ASEAN relations under Vietnam Chairmanship of ASEAN](#)

October 20, 2020, Modern Diplomacy

India has very recently come out with India-ASEAN Action Plan 2021-2025 alluding to the objectives for furthering its relationship with the ASEAN nations. In the plan it is clearly envisaged that there will be cooperation in the area such as trade, investment, counterterrorism and in developing the edifice related to maritime security. It has been found that under the Vietnam chairmanship there is a need for addressing challenges emerging in the field of pandemics and medical research, so as to protect lives of many individuals across southern Asia. Further, in terms of increasing connectivity between the two sides and reviewing the achievements of the India ASEAN strategic partnership there has been positive movement from both sides.

### [Vietnam invites India for ASEAN virtual summit in November](#)

October 20, 2020, WION News

Vietnam has invited India to take part in the ASEAN virtual summit that will take place from November 13 to 15.

### [Five Takeaways from the Australia-Japan Defense Ministers' Joint Statement](#)

Japan Times, October 22, 2020

While Yoshihide Suga conducted his first overseas trip as prime minister, another important development in Japanese foreign policy took place this week in Tokyo. Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi and his Australian counterpart, Linda Reynolds, forged a historic joint statement on advancing defense cooperation between the two democracies — an agreement that carries more significance than perhaps the media will capture.

## Central & West Asia

### Central Asia

#### [Govt to soon finalize air corridor between India-Uzbekistan & other Central Asian countries: Ambassador of India to Uzbekistan](#)

October 21, 2020, FICCI

Addressing the 'India-Uzbekistan Business Forum' webinar, organized by FICCI, Prabhat emphasized the need for enhanced air connectivity between the two countries. "We are working on the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and Uzbekistan can also become its member. An air corridor between India and Central Asia is also being worked on. Indian carriers should also target direct flights to Uzbekistan," he said. Prabhat urged the Indian freight forwarders to come together to establish a profitable trade route.

#### [Uzbekistan a key partner in India's efforts to build strategic uranium reserve](#)

October 21, 2020, Nuclear Asia

Endowed with one of the richest uranium reserves in the world, Uzbekistan, the most populous country in Central Asia, is a key partner for India in the latter's efforts to develop a strategic reserve of nuclear fuel for ensuring long-term energy security. While Uzbekistan is preparing to build its first nuclear power plant (NPP), which will become the first NPP in the region after a long hiatus, India has recently achieved criticality with its first indigenously built 700 MW Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) at Kakrapar in Gujarat state.

#### [Competition among ports in the Caspian Sea and the significance of the port of Baku](#)

October 23, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

All the Caspian littoral countries – Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkmenistan – take efforts to establish and develop transportation ports in the Caspian Sea, with the aim to take the maximum advantage from the transit of cargos between Europe and Asia.

#### [Armenia Keeps Targeting Strategic Azerbaijan's Sites Far from Conflict Zone](#)

October 21, 2020, Caspian News

Armenian armed forces keep trying to blow up Azerbaijan's strategic sites far from the frontline including the Baku-Novorossiysk oil pipeline. According to the press service of the Prosecutor General's Office of Azerbaijan, on October 18, at about 1:00 p.m. Baku time, Armenian armed forces conducted a missile attack on crude oil and condensate pipelines in the Khizi district, which is located north of Azerbaijan's capital Baku.

### [Uzbekistan, Afghanistan Sign Cooperative Agreements](#)

October 22, 2020, Khaama Press

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs says that the Afghan and Uzbek sectoral agencies have signed two cooperation agreements.

### [Iranian Embassy Condemns Missile Attack On Azerbaijan's Ganja City](#)

October 19, 2020, Caspian News

The Iranian embassy in Baku has strongly condemned the recent rocket attack on Azerbaijan's second-largest city of Ganja and underlined that the attack on innocent people is "against all international legal norms".

### [Kazakhstan, UAE Sign Deals Worth Over \\$6 Billion](#)

October 19, 2020, Caspian News

The United Arab Emirates and Kazakhstan have signed an agreement worth \$6.1 billion during Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin's two-day visit to Abu Dhabi last week, under which the two countries will implement more than 20 projects across a wide range of economic sectors.

### [Trump's Middle East Metamorphosis](#)

October 19, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

George W. Bush and Barack Obama both tried to transform the Middle East. Neither found the kind of success he sought. But as the U.S. has reduced its regional footprint and ambitions, the Middle East has begun to change on its own. One of the most recent signs of its metamorphosis was Saudi Prince Bandar's blistering criticism of Palestinian leaders for their decades of poor decision-making... In the new Middle East, the younger generation is turning its back on religious radicalism, and Arab public opinion is moving to accept the presence of a Jewish state.

## **West Asia**

### [India Set to Lose Farzad-B Gas Field in Iran](#)

October 18, 2020, Livemint

India has all but lost the ONGC Videsh Ltd-discovered Farzad-B gas field in the Persian Gulf after Iran decided to prefer domestic companies over foreign firms for development of the field.

### [Mideast Share of India's September Oil Imports Falls to Four-month Low - Sources](#)

October 21, 2020, Yahoo Finance

Middle East producers' share of India's market fell to a four-month low in September while that of Africa rose to one year high, according to data obtained from industry sources.

### [India Hopeful of 'Positive Resolution' over Pending Pay for Indian Workers in Saudi Arabia](#)

October 23, 2020, The Hindu

The Indian mission in Saudi Arabia has taken up the matter of 286 Indian workers who were reportedly not paid end of service dues by a private firm there, and it is hopeful of a "positive resolution" of the issue, according to the Ministry of External Affairs.

### [Bharat Petroleum Tries to Cut Dependence on LPG from the Middle East](#)

October 16, 2020, The Economic Times

The latest tender by Bharat Petroleum is aimed at getting better prices for Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) supplies compared with those from the Middle East and to diversify sources of LPG. India's fuel retailers get most of their LPG -- typically used for cooking -- from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the U.A.E. and Kuwait, leaving them exposed to price fluctuations and supply shocks.

### [India, Oman to Speed Up Double Taxation Pact](#)

October 19, 2020, Deccan Herald

India and Oman have agreed to expedite their internal procedures for signing and ratification of a protocol to amend the bilateral double taxation agreement and conclusion of an investment treaty.

### [Israel Aligned with PM Modi's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', 'Make in India' Vision: Israeli Envoy](#)

October 14, 2020, Hindustan Times

Hailing the selection by the Indian government of an Israeli firm 'NeoLync' for electronics manufacturing in India, Israeli Ambassador Ron Malka has said the development signifies his country's alignment with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Make in India' vision.

### [Sudan-Israel Diplomatic Normalization Announcement Likely This Weekend](#)

October 22, 2020, The Jerusalem Post

An announcement that Sudan and Israel will begin the process of normalizing ties is imminent, an Israeli government source said Thursday (October 22) after Israeli and American officials visited Khartoum.

### [Arms Embargo on Iran Expires Despite the US Opposition](#)

October 18, 2020, Al Jazeera

The 13-year arms embargo imposed by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) came to an end on Sunday (October 18) as part of Resolution 2231 of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), an accord signed in 2015 that gave Iran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear programme.

### [Mike Pompeo Warns of Sanctions for Any Arms Sales to Iran](#)

October 18, 2020, Arab News

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Sunday (October 18) said that arms sales to Iran would breach UN resolutions and result in sanctions, after Tehran said the longstanding UN embargo on arms trade with the Islamic republic had expired.

### [US Sanctions Six Chinese Companies for Trade with Iran](#)

October 20, 2020, Livemint

The United States on Monday (October 19) has imposed sanctions on six Chinese companies for their dealings with Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL), which is used by Iran to "transport proliferation-sensitive items intended for Iran's ballistic missile and military programs".

### [Germany's Angela Merkel Meets with Iraqi Prime Minister in Berlin](#)

October 20, 2020, Deutsche Welle

German Chancellor Angela Merkel met with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi on Tuesday (October 20) in Berlin, where she pledged to continue to support the Middle Eastern country on security issues and during the coronavirus pandemic.

### [Saudi Arabia's \\$20bn Bid to Lead the World in Artificial Intelligence](#)

October 21, 2020, Arab News

Saudi Arabia launched an audacious multibillion-dollar strategy on Wednesday to become a global leader in artificial intelligence (AI) and data by 2030. The aim is to train 20,000 specialists and experts, have 300 active start-ups and attract \$20 billion in national and foreign investment in data and AI.

## United States

### United States

#### [On India-US agenda, a plan to share defence intel from Ladakh to South China Sea](#)

October 21, 2020, Hindustan Times

India and US leaders will build on past gains at the meeting being held weeks before the US Presidential elections on November 3, comfortable in the knowledge that there is bi-partisan consensus within the US on deepening India-US strategic relationship.

#### [US will probably discuss India-China border situation during 2+2 dialogue: State Dept official](#)

October 23, 2020, The Times of India

The situation on the Line of Actual Control will probably be discussed at some point during 2+2 dialogue and the United States is watching the situation closely, said Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Dean Thompsom .

#### [BECA and other agreements between India and US are in the works: Senior US govt officials](#)

October 23, 2020, The Hindu Business Line

The India-US 2+2 discussions next week will focus on global cooperation on pandemic response and challenges in the Indo-Pacific incorporating economic space and energy collaboration, people-to-people ties, and defense and security cooperation, according to senior US government officials.

#### [‘Look at India, the air is filthy,’ says US President Donald Trump at final debate](#)

October 23, 2020, Hindustan Times

US President Donald Trump used the word “filthy” to describe pollution in India during an exchange on climate crisis as he clashed with Democratic rival Joe Biden on Covid-19, immigration, racism, healthcare and foreign policy in their second and final debate in the race for the White House.

#### [Trump's ban on H-1B, L1 has cost \\$100 billion to American companies: Report](#)

October 23, 2020, Mint

President Donald Trump's executive order restricting entry of skilled foreign workers into the US, mainly on H-1B and L1 visas, has resulted in an estimated loss of USD 100 billion to companies here, a top American think-tank claimed.

### [Full Analysis and Highlights of the Trump vs. Biden Debate](#)

October 22, 2020, The New York Times

President Trump and former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. met for a second and final debate, moderated by Kristen Welker of NBC News.

### [Russia Poses Greater Election Threat Than Iran, Many U.S. Officials Say](#)

October 22, 2020, The New York Times

While senior Trump administration officials said this week that Iran has been actively interfering in the presidential election, many intelligence officials said they remained far more concerned about Russia, which in recent days has hacked into state and local computer networks in breaches that could allow Moscow broader access to American voting infrastructure.

### [Russia says still not close to agreement with U.S. on nuclear pact - RIA](#)

October 23, 2020, Reuters

Russia's deputy foreign minister said that Moscow and Washington were still not close to reaching an agreement over the New START arms control treaty, the RIA news agency reported.

### [US will expand arms sales to 'like-minded nations' to counter China, Russia, defence chief says](#)

October 21, 2020, South China Morning Post

US Defence Secretary Mark Esper says the United States will expand arms sales to "like-minded nations" to counter efforts by China and Russia to take a bigger share of the weapons market.

### [US approves \\$1.8bn in potential arms sales to Taiwan](#)

October 21, 2020, Al Jazeera

The US Department of State has approved the potential sale of three weapons systems to Taiwan, including sensors, missiles and artillery that could have a total value of \$1.8bn, the Pentagon said, amid rising tension over the self-ruled island that China claims as its own.

### [China threatens retaliation after new US arms sales to Taiwan](#)

October 22, 2020, Deccan Herald

China threatened to retaliate against the latest US arms sale to Chinese-claimed Taiwan, as the island welcomed the weapons package but said it was not looking to get into an arms race with Beijing.

[US Democrat senators introduce bill to restrict sale of F-35 jets to UAE](#)

October 22, 2020, Middle East Eye

Two Democratic senators introduced a bill aimed at restricting the Trump administration's efforts to sell F-35 fighter jets to the United Arab Emirates.

[U.S. Spy Agency Warns That Chinese Hackers Target Military, Defense Industry](#)

October 20, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

The National Security Agency warned that Chinese government hackers were taking aim at U.S. computer networks involved in national defense, characterizing the threat posed by Beijing as a critical priority in need of urgent attention.

## Europe & Russia

### Europe

#### [India, European Union discuss strategic partnership in a post-Covid-19 world](#)

October 23, 2020, Deccan Herald

India and the European Union reviewed their overall cooperation in a range of key areas including cyberspace, non-proliferation, maritime security, and ways to effectively deal with terrorism.

#### [European Union wants WHO to be more transparent](#)

October 22, 2020, Deccan Herald

The European Union wants the World Health Organization to become more transparent about how states report emerging health crises, a draft proposal on reforming the UN agency says, following criticism of China's initial handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### [Greece asks European Union countries to halt military exports to Turkey](#)

October 20, 2020, Business Standard

Greece has asked fellow EU countries to halt military exports to Turkey, the country's foreign minister said, amid a deepening dispute between the two neighbors over maritime boundaries.

#### [Back at the Brexit table, UK and EU try to tackle fish](#)

October 23, 2020, Reuters

The chief negotiators of Britain and the European Union meet for intensive negotiations on a last-minute trade deal that would stave off a tumultuous finale to the five-year-old Brexit crisis.

#### [Europe Wonders if It Can Rely on U.S. Again, Whoever Wins](#)

October 22, 2020, The New York Times

America's deeply polarized politics have marked foreign policy, too, undermining Washington's authority and reputation for reliability.

#### [EU sanctions two Russian military officers over cyber attack against German parliament](#)

October 23, 2020, Euro News

The European Union slapped sanctions on two Russian military officials over a 2015 cyber-attack against the German parliament in which a "significant amount of data was stolen".

### [NATO Must Tackle Eastern Europe's Defence Infrastructure Gap](#)

October 20, 2020, Balkan Insight

As Russia flexes its muscles in the region, building up the far from robust defence infrastructure on NATO's 'Eastern Flank' is vital – and will complete the region's integration into the alliance.

### [France to reach NATO spending target in 2020, but most allies fall short](#)

October 21, 2020, Reuters

France, one of Europe's biggest military powers, will reach a NATO spending goal of 2% sought by the United States this year, the alliance said, but most member states still lag behind in a continual sore point for Washington.

### [French government intensifies action against Islamism, Macron says](#)

October 20, 2020, Reuters

The French government has intensified action against Islamist extremism in recent days after a teacher was beheaded for showing caricatures of the Prophet Mohammad in class, President Emmanuel Macron said.

### [Slovenian, Portuguese, German defence ministers talk European defence](#)

October 22, 2020, STA

Defence Minister Matej Tonin had an informal videoconference with his German and Portuguese counterparts, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer and Joao Gomes Cravinho. The talks focused on European defence policy.

## **Russia**

### [Any US president who considers building dialogue will suit Russia - Kremlin spokesman](#)

October 23, 2020, TASS

It's not right to say that Moscow would prefer Donald Trump to be reelected US president, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Channel One's Great Game show. He pointed out that any US president who considered building dialogue with Russia would suit Moscow.

### [Russia will cope with sanctions imposed against it, says Putin](#)

October 22, 2020, TASS

Russia will be able to cope with the sanctions imposed against it, Russian President Vladimir Putin said at a meeting of the Valdai discussion club. Commenting on international cooperation in general Putin said that Russia

had urged lifting all restrictions in the economy and humanitarian sphere during the coronavirus pandemic.

#### [Russia makes US an offer on last major arms control treaty](#)

October 20, 2020, Al Jazeera

Russia said it would be ready to freeze its total number of nuclear warheads if the United States did the same in order to extend their last major arms control treaty by a year.

#### [Nuke treaty termination won't harm Russian security: Vladimir Putin](#)

October 23, 2020, Business Standard

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that even if the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) with the US expires, Moscow can ensure its security with modern weapons.

#### [Russia's Putin says China and Germany heading for superpower status as US influence wanes](#)

October 22, 2020, Times Now

The era when the United States and Russia decided the world's most important questions is in the past, President Vladimir Putin said, saying China and Germany were now heading for superpower status.

#### [How Russia emerged as key mediator in the China-India dispute](#)

October 23, 2020, East Asia Forum

The conflict coincides with Russia's presidency of two key international forums: BRICS, a grouping of major non-Western powers Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). This presents Moscow with both a challenge and an opportunity.

## Africa & Latin America

### Latin America

#### [US offers \\$1 billion deal to Brazil to sway it away from China's Huawei 5G network](#)

October 21, 2020, WION

The United States pledged a \$1 billion deal to Brazil to sway it away from China's Huawei to develop its 5G network.

#### [Will Not Buy China's Sinovac Vaccine, Says Brazilian President](#)

October 21,2020, NDTV

"For sure, we will not buy the Chinese vaccine," Jair Bolsonaro said on social media, responding to a supporter who urged him not to buy the vaccine. The president said the issue would be clarified later in the day.

#### [US trade embargo causes \\$144 billion losses for Cuban economy](#)

October 23, 2020, Business Standard

The US trade embargo against Cuba has caused more than \$144 billion in losses for the island nation's economy in the past six decades, Foreign Affairs Minister Bruno Rodriguez said.

#### [Mexico reaches water deal with US despite violent protests](#)

October 23, 2020, BBC News

A bilateral treaty signed in 1944 says the two countries must share water sources along their arid border. Mexican farmers say they need the water themselves, in what has been one of the driest years in decades.

#### [U.S. Broadens Sanctions on Russia-Led Nord Stream 2 Pipeline](#)

October 21, 2020, Oil Price.com

The U.S. is broadening the sanctions against service providers and those funding vessels involved in the construction of Nord Stream 2 in a fresh attempt to prevent the Russia-led gas pipeline project from completing, the U.S. Department of State said in new guidance.

#### [Venezuela plans to use Russian and Chinese coronavirus vaccines](#)

October 21, 2020, Reuters

Venezuela plans to vaccinate citizens with Russian and Chinese coronavirus vaccines, which could arrive in the South American nation in December or January, President Nicolas Maduro said.

## **Africa**

### [Namibia considers exploration and acquisitions](#)

October 20, 2020, Energy Voice

Namibia's Petroleum Commissioner Maggy Shino, talking during IN-VR's Africa Upstream, LNG & Gas Summit, said a number of wells are being drilled in the near future.

### [Rwanda, Burundi agree on talks to normalize ties](#)

October 20, 2020, Andolou Agency

Rwanda and Burundi agreed to start talks to end tensions between the neighbors. Rwanda's top diplomat Vincent Biruta met his Burundian counterpart Albert Shingiro at the Nemba-Gasenyi border point as part of efforts to kickstart efforts to resolve outstanding bilateral issues.

### [India working on relief, return of 33 Indians stuck in Somalia](#)

October 23, 2020, Deccan Herald

India is working on relief and return of 33 Indians stuck in Somalia and the High Commission in Nairobi has taken up their predicament with Somalian authorities, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said.

### [Israeli delegation travels to Sudan to discuss normalization: reports](#)

October 22, 2020, CGTN

An Israeli delegation made a visit to Sudan to discuss normalizing ties, Israeli public broadcaster Kan radio said, as a minister predicted a possible diplomatic breakthrough between the two countries.

### [Trump says Sudan to be removed from terrorism list](#)

October 20, 2020, The Tribune

President Donald Trump said Sudan will be removed from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism if it follows through on its pledge to pay \$335 million to American terror victims and their families, but some hurt in the attacks weren't happy with the deal.

### [Kagame calls for acceleration of African Union reforms](#)

October 23, 2020, The New Times

President Paul Kagame has called on the African Union Commission and African Union Member states to accelerate consultations on aspects of the reforms process such as division of labour.

### [The Nigerian protests are about much more than police violence](#)

October 20, 2020, Al Jazeera

By now, to anyone clued into Nigerian politics, two things are clear. First, the frustrations expressed in the streets of Nigerian cities, from Lagos to Port Harcourt to Abuja, are about far more than the crimes of a police unit. Second, Nigerian youth are rediscovering their power, picking up the mantle of the cultural and political resistance that in the past helped snatch the country back from the jaws of military dictatorship.

### [Trump's Accomplishment in Africa](#)

October 21, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

It's rare for a country to turn from a regional menace into a responsible partner, but the Trump Administration's diplomacy with Sudan is helping make that happen. This project has reached a critical point, and Congress should support the White House effort. Sudan became a pariah state under the 30-year reign of dictator Omar al-Bashir, who gave al Qaeda refuge as it planned terrorist attacks like the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. The U.S. designated the country a state sponsor of terrorism in 1993. More recently Sudan's behavior has improved, and last year Mr. Bashir fell from power.



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