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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.

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India

**Stick to bilateral pacts on LAC: India to China**

December 4, 2020, The Times of India

Following the assertion by a US panel that China planned the violent Galwan face-off, India again underlined the significance of all bilateral agreements and protocols, including the agreements of 1993 and 1996, saying the core issue is the need for both India and China to follow these for maintenance of peace and tranquility along the LAC.

**India, Vietnam to jointly train pilots, collaborate in shipbuilding**

December 1, 2020, Defence Aviation Post

As part of increased defense cooperation, India & Vietnam have agreed on joint training of pilots by the respective Air Forces and training of forces to be deployed in UN Peacekeeping missions.

**Indian Navy to procure more submarines and other assets to boost combat prowess: Naval chief**

December 3, 2020, Mint

Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh said the Indian Navy is moving towards procuring a number of key assets including six more submarines, and pitched for a third aircraft carrier even as he asserted that the force is fully ready to deal with any challenge including from China.

**India refuses to support China’s Belt and Road project at SCO meet**

November 30, 2020, Hindustan Times

India didn’t join other members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in backing China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which New Delhi has consistently opposed as a key part of it passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

**India makes its move, invites Boris Johnson to be Republic Day chief guest**

December 3, 2020, Hindustan Times

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to be chief guest at the 2021 Republic Day, and if he accepts an invitation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi it will make him the first British PM since John Major in 1993 to be guest of honour at the event.
India-Mongolia Joint Committee on Cooperation
December 4, 2020, Central Asia News.net

The seventh meeting of the India-Mongolia Joint Committee on Cooperation was held virtually between External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr S Jaishankar and Chief Cabinet Secretary of Mongolia L Oyun-Erdene, wherein the two ministers held comprehensive discussions on the range of issues covering bilateral cooperation.

China and Pakistan sign military deal amid tensions with India
December 2, 2020, Defence Aviation Post

China and Pakistan signed a new memorandum of understanding to boost their already close military relations, as China’s Defence Minister and People’s Liberation Army (PLA) General Wei Fenghe visited the headquarters of the Pakistani army at Rawalpindi.

Chinese defence minister’s visit to Nepal, Pakistan made with eye on India, say experts
December 2, 2020, Hindustan Times

China’s actions during its defence minister’s recent visits to Nepal and Pakistan, including the signing of a defence agreement in Islamabad, were apparently made with an eye on India, experts and former diplomats said.

Pakistan

ADB approves $300 million policy-based loan for Pakistan
November 28, 2020, The News

Asian Development Bank approved another $300 million policy-based loan to help Pakistan improve trade competitiveness, asserting the lender’s support to the IMF-backed reforms in the country. ADB said the loan will help promote macroeconomic stability in the country by facilitating improved trade competitiveness and export diversification.

National Intelligence Committee formed
November 29, 2020, The News

The National Intelligence Committee (NIC) has been established to create harmony and better contact among the civil and military intelligence institutions in Pakistan. The committee – led by the federal interior secretary has been constituted after approval by Prime Minister Imran Khan.
Virus surge, restrictions threaten economic recovery

November 28, 2020, Dawn

Pakistan federal government has admitted that its nascent economic recovery is faced with downside risks owing to the second wave of Covid-19 at home as well as in major trading partners though inflationary pressures are easing out. "Looking at the impact of the ongoing coronavirus, the downside risks are becoming prominent," stated the monthly economic update and outlook for November report of the finance ministry.

Pakistan steps up efforts to regain export share in Afghan market

November 30, 2020, The News

Pakistan has geared up its efforts to regain the export share in Afghanistan market that slipped to Iran and India because of previous faulty policies, and positive parleys between Islamabad and Kabul are underway for preferential trade agreement (PTA), and trade under Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA).

PM orders special body to oversee border management

December 1, 2020, Dawn

Prime Minister Imran Khan ordered setting up of a special division under the supervision of an additional secretary from the interior ministry to make the border management system more effective. He asked the departments concerned to timely share information and data on border security and management.

MoU signed with China to enhance defence ties

December 1, 2020, Dawn

Pakistan and China inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for enhancement of defence cooperation between the armies of the two countries. Prior to signing of the MoU, General Wei Fenghe, Minister of National Defence of China, called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of the Army Staff, at the General Headquarters. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security and enhanced bilateral defence collaboration were discussed.

Fuel loading starts for nuclear power plant testing

December 2, 2020, Dawn

Pakistan started loading fuel to the 1,100MW nuclear power plant in Karachi for testing in run-up to its commercial operations in April 2021 while the POK government signed agreements with a Chinese company for construction of a 700MW hydropower project. A spokesperson for the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) said fuel loading for the newly built Karachi Nuclear Power
Plant Unit-2 (K-2) was started after obtaining fuel load permit from the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority.

**JuD leaders convicted in another case**

December 3, 2020, Dawn

An anti-terrorism court convicted three leaders of the banned Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) in another case of terror financing. Announcing the guilty verdict in a case registered in 2019, Presiding Judge Ijaz Ahmad Buttar handed down sentence of 15 years and half month imprisonment to Zafar Iqbal and Yahya Mujahid each, while JuD leader Hafiz Abdul Rehman Makki was jailed for six months.

**10 doctors die of Covid-19 within five days in country**

December 3, 2020, Dawn

As the Covid-19 cases are soaring across the country, the second wave of the pandemic is taking a high toll on medical professionals, causing the death of 10 doctors within five days and forcing some 3,000 health workers into isolation across Pakistan. Six of the 10 doctors died on a single day (Nov 29) in Karachi, Lahore and Multan.

**Rs38bn cross-border optic fibre project under CPEC cleared**

December 3, 2020, Dawn

The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) cleared five development projects at a cumulative cost of about Rs54 billion including Rs38bn second phase of a project for laying cross-border optic fibre cable with China. At a meeting presided over by Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan, the CDWP itself approved four development projects with cumulative estimated cost of Rs16bn and referred for approval to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnc) the Rs37.91bn Optic Fibre Cable (OFC) Project along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Route (Khunjrab-Gwadar-Karachi).

**Afghanistan**

**US Closes 10 Bases Around Afghanistan: Report**

November 29, 2020, Tolo News

The US has closed at least 10 bases across Afghanistan since the signing of a deal with the Taliban in February. The aircraft carrier USS Nimitz is being moved back into the Persian Gulf region along with other warships to provide combat support and air cover as US troops withdraw from Iraq and Afghanistan by January 15 under President Trump’s orders, according to a defense official.
Afghanistan: 34 people killed in two suicide bombings
November 29, 2020, Al-Jazeera

At least 34 people have been killed in two separate suicide bombings that targeted a military base and a provincial chief. In eastern Ghazni province, 31 soldiers were killed and 24 others wounded when an attacker drove a military vehicle full of explosives onto an army commando base before detonating it.

Pakistan to Open 12 Markets on Durand Line
December 1, 2020, Tolo News

Pakistan government has decided to establish 12 Joint Trade Markets (JBTMs) along with Afghanistan along the Durand Line. First one is at Shaheedano Dand in Kurram Agency will be open by February 2021, as a pilot project.

NATO Chief Reiterates Call for Afghan Ceasefire
December 2, 2020, Tolo News

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, at the first session of the NATO foreign ministers meeting, said: “We call on Taliban to reduce violence, but of course, that’s only the first step.” “What we need to see is a lasting peace agreement. And part of that has to be a ceasefire. So, the reduction of violence should only be the first step,” Stoltenberg said, adding that “The ambition is intra-Afghan peace solution. And, of course, that has to include a comprehensive ceasefire.” He said that NATO supports the Afghan peace process and, as part of that, NATO adjusted its presence in Afghanistan.

Afghan gov’t, Taliban announce breakthrough deal in peace talks
December 2, 2020, Al-Jazeera

Afghan government and Taliban representatives said they have reached a preliminary deal to press on with peace talks, their first written agreement in 19 years of war. The agreement lays out the way forward for further discussion but is considered a breakthrough because it will allow negotiators to move on to more substantive issues, including talks on a ceasefire.

Bangladesh

India-Bangladesh border talks expected to be held in Guwahati, first time outside Delhi
December 3, 2020, The Print

India and Bangladesh are expected to hold their Director General-level border talks in Guwahati later this month, the first time the biannual meeting will be held outside Delhi, official sources said.
China promises ‘good communication’ with India ahead of dam across Brahmaputra

December 3, 2020, The Hindu

China played down its plan to build a major dam in the lower reaches of the Brahmaputra river in Tibet, saying there is no need to have “any anxiety over the project.

India plans dam on Brahmaputra river against Chinese projects

December 2, 2020, Al Jazeera

India is considering a plan to build a 10-gigawatt (GW) hydropower project in a remote eastern state, an Indian official, said, following reports that China could construct dams on a section of the Brahmaputra river.

Nepal

Nepal foreign minister to visit India this month to restore normalcy to bilateral ties

December 2, 2020, Hindustan Times

Nepal’s foreign minister Pradeep Gyawali is set to visit India this month for a meeting with his counterpart S Jaishankar aimed at boosting efforts to restore normalcy to bilateral ties hit by a border row earlier this year.

Chinese Defense Minister Visits Nepal Amid Signs of Thaw in India-Nepal Relations

December 3, 2020, The Diplomat

A blockade of Nepal in 2015 that was unofficially supported by India has paved the way for greater ties between Beijing and Kathmandu.

PM Oli pulls off surprise, draws a red line for ambassador Hou Yanqi

November 28, 2020, Hindustan Times

Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli is believed to have suggested to Chinese ambassador Hou Yanqi last week that he is capable of handling challenges within his party without any assistance from other countries, according to people familiar with the matter.
India-Nepal Inter-Governmental Sub-Committee Meeting For Enhancing Economic Ties Begins

December 3, 2020, Business World

The two-day meeting of the India-Nepal Inter-Governmental Sub-Committee at the joint secretary level began here for enhancing bilateral trade and economic ties.

Bhutan

India opens four trade routes with Bhutan

December 3, 2020, WION

India has opened four new trade routes with Bhutan at Nagarkata, Agartala, Jogighopa, and Pandu.

India wants Bhutan to settle China border issue so it can define trijunction area near Doklam

November 30, 2020, The Print

India is pushing Bhutan to settle its border issue with China to enable New Delhi to define the trijunction area of Doklam. There are, however, fears that Beijing is doing a South China Sea in Bhutan — gradually taking over land.

Srilanka

India, Sri Lanka and Maldives agree to bolster maritime security cooperation

November 28, 2020, The Economic Times

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval took part in the trilateral maritime dialogue in Colombo among India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives eyeing to counter terrorism & radicalism through effective intelligence cooperation. The partnership also assumes significance amid Beijing’s growing ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region including Indian Ocean Region.

Eyeing China, NSA Doval looks to promote Indo-Pacific strategy in Sri Lanka

November 28, 2020, The Print

The NSA’s visit to Sri Lanka comes days after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged Colombo to not depend on China.
China

Li urges SCO countries to advance integrated growth
December 1, 2020, China Daily

Premier Li Keqiang called upon the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to proactively foster new drivers of growth in areas such as the digital economy, promote high-quality development and pursue a green economic recovery.

PLA holds intensive fighter jet exercises at strategic military location in NW China
December 1, 2020, Global Times

A large number of Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) warplanes recently conducted a series of intensive exercises around a Western Theater Command Air Force base, which is located at an important strategic point in Northwest China. The drills honed and demonstrated the Chinese military’s capability to safeguard the country’s western air defence border, analysts said.

China’s UN envoy calls for global resolve on Palestinian question
December 3, 2020, China Daily

China’s ambassador to the United Nations stressed his nation's support for a lasting peaceful solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict and called for the international community to find a just and early solution to the Palestinian question.

China refutes U.S. allegations on fishing practices
December 3, 2020, Xinhua

The U.S. accusations regarding China’s fishery practices are completely baseless and have bent international law and relevant multilateral fisheries agreements, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said.

China has right to develop Yarlung Zangbo River, to stay in touch with India, Bangladesh: Chinese FM
December 3, 2020, Global Times

It is China’s legitimate right to develop the hydropower of Yarlung Zangbo River, Chinese foreign ministry said, noting that China will stay in touch with India, Bangladesh through existing channels.
China slams U.S. for blocking cotton imports from Xinjiang

December 3, 2020, Xinhua

Some U.S. politicians fabricated the so-called "forced labor" issue with the purpose of restricting and suppressing Chinese enterprises and containing China's development, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

Senior CPC official urges BRICS experience-sharing on governance

December 4, 2020, Xinhua

A senior official of the Communist Party of China (CPC) called for strengthened experience-sharing among BRICS countries on matters of governance.

Aussie foreign relations bill could further worsen China ties

December 3, 2020, Global Times

Australia’s parliament passed legislation empowering its federal government to veto any agreement struck with foreign states, a move likely to further worsen China-Australia ties which are already extremely tense, as Chinese experts warned that Canberra should be careful and avoid any escalation to cause non-repairable damage.

Japan

Japan’s Suga repeats vow to host Olympics despite coronavirus surge

December 4, 2020, Kyodo News

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga reiterated his commitment to hosting the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics next summer, promising that the games, which were delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic, will be "safe and secure" even as Japan grapples with its worst wave yet of infections.

Japan to help India with 5G to counter China’s growing influence

November 29, 2020, Nikkei Asia

Japan and India will tie up in the field of information and communications to counter China’s growing influence on telecommunications and digital infrastructure, Japanese government officials said.

Japan to work with both U.S., Britain in developing next fighter jet

December 3, 2020, Japan Today

Japan has decided to develop a successor to its aging F-2 fighter jet jointly with both the United States and Britain instead of picking only one partner, government sources said.
Japan enacts law to make coronavirus vaccines free to residents
December 2, 2020, Japan Today
The Diet enacted a law to cover the costs for residents to be vaccinated against the coronavirus, as hopes grow for the early arrival of vaccines following recent reports of progress amid a resurgence of infections.

Russia deploys missiles to Pacific islands claimed by Japan
December 2, 2020, Japan Today
The Russian military announced the deployment of state-of-the-art air defense missiles to the Pacific islands claimed by Japan.

Cabinet to approve Aegis ships as alternative to ashore system
November 29, 2020, Japan Today
The cabinet is set to approve a plan to build two new Aegis ships as a platform for missile interceptor systems among three options to replace the scrapped project to introduce a land-based system, government sources said.

Korea

N.Korea Building 'Coronavirus Wall'
November 30, 2020, The Chosun Ilbo
North Korea said it is building a wall along the border with South Korea to stem the spread of coronavirus. The Trump-inspired folly aims to put the blame on coronavirus infections in the crackpot country squarely on South Korea and is likely designed for propaganda purposes rather than any practical use.

US Army Pacific commander reportedly named as new USFK chief
December 4, 2020, The Korea Times
U. S. Army Pacific Commander Gen. Paul LaCamera has been nominated to be the next commander of the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK), sources said.

US flies reconnaissance planes over S. Korea: aviation tracker
December 1, 2020, The Korea Times
U.S. reconnaissance planes flew over South Korea for the past several days in a row, an aviation tracker showed, in an apparent move to monitor North Korea.
US says China's failure to enforce sanctions delaying North Korea denuclearization

December 2, 2020, The Korea Times

China's failure, if not refusal, to implement U.N. sanctions aimed at denuclearizing North Korea may be delaying the process, a senior U.S. diplomat said.

Southeast Asia

India-Vietnam's growing relations: Future prospects

December 3, 2020, The Times of India

India sees Vietnam as a trustworthy friendly foreign country with shared strategic concerns and common interests. Both countries are collaborating in multiple domains of defence cooperation like ship-building, surface and subsurface capacities at sea and have plans for enhancing their collaboration in the above field.

Myanmar Polls Can Help India Enhance Foothold

December 2, 2020, Qrius

The unthinkable happened in June 2020. A spokesman of Myanmar's military accused China of arming rebel groups adding the "insurgents" were getting sophisticated military weapons.

Chinese Tech Investors Turn Attention To Indonesia As India's Economy Shrinks

November 29, 2020, Pymnts

Numerous investment groups, including Shunwei Capital, which was introduced by Xiaomi founders, and Ant Group-backed BAce Capital, have signalled that they're looking to invest more in Indonesia.

Malaysia and China in stand-off near PTTEP's appraisal drilling

November 30, 2020, Upstream

Malaysia and China in stand-off near The Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) and Royal Malaysian Navy have been involved in yet another standoff over oil and gas drilling in the South China Sea as tensions mount between regional powers over resources in the strategic sea area.
The Philippines Is Sticking Right by America’s Side
December 2, 2020, The Diplomat
Despite President Duterte's much-vaunted “pivot to China,” the nation’s relationship with the U.S. remains as strong as ever.

Philippines Eyes China, Russia For Early Vaccine Access
December 2, 2020, Bloomberg
The Philippines expects to start administering coronavirus vaccines as early as the first quarter of next year, pinning its hopes on China and Russia as its own procurement policies hamper efforts for early access.

Cambodia’s aim in trade deals: keep the US and Japan close, but China closer
November 28, 2020, SCMP
Phnom Penh is negotiating a raft of free-trade agreements, but the pacts are not expected to lessen its reliance on Beijing. Analysts say the agreements are intended to help Cambodia diversify its trade game and will not pull the country out of Beijing’s orbit.
Central Asia

Investors from Nordic countries focus on Kazakhstan
December 4, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

Opportunities for investment, trade and economic cooperation of Kazakhstan with Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway were discussed during the first business meeting “Kazakhstan – Northern Europe” on December 3. Over 200 companies from the Nordic countries participated in the event, Kazakh Invest national investment promotion company reported.

Turkmenistan, now with Soviet-style deficits, on brink of explosion
December 2, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

As Turkmenistan is experiencing its worst economic crisis ever, there is a growing dissent among the Turkmens both inside the country and abroad, which may ultimately result in an open protest against the country’s authoritarian leader.

The new China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan corridor
November 28, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

Landlocked Kyrgyzstan is set to benefit from the construction of a railroad link connecting China and Uzbekistan and meant to transit Chinese goods in the direction of the Caspian ports and on to Europe. The project, however, would face resistance from Russia, which tries to maintain its declining influence in Central Asia.

Iran and the SCO: continued obstacles to full membership
December 1, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

For the Shanghai Cooperation Organization member countries — Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, and Pakistan — Iran’s potential full membership of the bloc would now entail more undesirable implications than advantages (such as expansion of the SCO’s geographic influence from Eurasia to the Middle East).

Turkey, Russia Finalized Negotiations For Creating Joint Monitoring Center In Azerbaijan’s Karabakh Region
December 3, 2020, Caspian News

Turkey and Russia have finalized an agreement that paves the way for the establishment of a joint monitoring centre in Azerbaijan’s Karabakh region.
Kazakhstan Plans To Launch Local Production of Russia’s ‘Sputnik V’ COVID-19 Vaccine
November 30, 2020, Caspian News

Government officials in Nur-Sultan are working to launch local production of a Russian-made vaccine against COVID-19, according to Alexey Tsoi, who heads the Kazakhstan’s health ministry.

Kazakhstan Seeks Support From Singapore As It Develops Digital Trade
November 29, 2020, Caspian News

As Kazakhstan pushes ahead with plans to accelerate the development of digital trade amid an ongoing crisis spurred by the global COVID-19 pandemic, officials in Nur-Sultan are looking to implement best practices from Singapore.

West Asia

Indian Army Chief to Visit Saudi Arabia and UAE
December 03, 2020, Hindustan Times

Indian Army Chief General MM Naravane is set to make a four-day visit to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from December 6.

India Hopes to Restart Oil Imports from Iran, Venezuela under President Biden
December 02, 2020, Oilprice.com

India would like to have more opportunities to work for diversifying its sources of crude, including by resuming oil imports from Venezuela and Iran under President Biden, according to India’s Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Biden: Iran Nuclear Deal Best Way to Avoid Middle East Arms Race
December 02, 2020, AL Jazeera

Biden said a return to the JCPOA, which would include lifting the sanctions imposed by the administration of President Donald Trump, would serve as a “starting point to follow-on negotiations” with Iran.

Iran Moves to Increase Uranium Enrichment and Bar Nuclear Inspectors
December 02, 2020, The New York Times

Iran responded to the assassination of its top nuclear scientist by enacting a law ordering an immediate ramping up of its enrichment of uranium to levels closer to weapons-grade fuel.
India Condemns Missile Attack on Saudi Arabia’s Oil Facility
December 02, 2020, The Economic Times
India strongly condemned the missile attack targeting a facility of Aramco oil company in Saudi Arabia’s Red Sea city of Jeddah last week.

India, Saudi Arabia Hold Talks on Air Bubble Agreement to Resume Flights
November 25, 2020, The New Indian Express
India and Saudi Arabia are holding talks to establish air bubble arrangement to facilitate unhindered travel between the two countries.

India’s UN Envoy Highlights ‘Steadfast Support’ for Palestinian Cause at UNGA
December 03, 2020, Republic World
India’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations TS Tirumurti said India has been steadfast in its support for the “just Palestinian cause,” and its solidarity for the people of Palestine.

Artillery Import Embargo Put off, Doors Open for INR 23,700 Crore Israeli Guns
November 30, 2020, Business Standard
On August 9, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) cited the Prime Minister’s Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) initiative to ban the import of artillery guns from December 2020. Twelve days later, the MoD backtracked and allowed imports for an extra year, clearing the decks for importing up to 1,580 guns from Israeli company, Elbit Systems.

Kuwait to Allow Return of Foreign Domestic Workers from December 7
December 02, 2020, Mathrubhumi
The Kuwait authority has announced that domestic workers from other countries will be allowed to enter the country from December 7. In the initial phase entry is limited only for workers from India and the Philippines.

Oman Announces Directive to Form Friendship Association with India
December 03, 2020, The Economic Times
Oman, India’s oldest strategic partner in West Asia, has announced to establish Oman-India Friendship Association, in what would be the first such initiative in West Asia led by the Foreign Ministry.

Saudi-Qatar Deal to End Blockade is Close, Say Reports
December 03, 2020, Middle East Eye
A deal between Saudi Arabia and Qatar to end the almost four-year blockade of Qatar could be close at hand, as US Middle East envoy Jared Kushner continued his tour of Gulf countries in the last days of the Trump administration.
Bahrain Open to Imports from Israeli Settlements

December 3, 2020, AL Jazeera

Bahrain’s imports from Israel will not be subject to distinctions between products made within Israel and those from illegal settlements in occupied territory, the Bahraini trade minister has said, drawing a rebuke from Palestinians.

U.S. ‘Withdrawing Some Baghdad Embassy Staff’ Amid Regional Tension

December 03, 2020, AL Jazeera

The United States embassy in Baghdad is withdrawing some of its staff ahead of the first anniversary of the US killing of top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani in the Iraqi capital.

UAE Pushes for Long-pending Carbine Deal under Make in India During Jaishankar Visit

November 28, 2020, The Print

The United Arab Emirates has pushed for the long-pending contract for 93,895 Close Quarter Battle (CQB) Carbines for Indian Army won by its state-owned firm, Caracal, during the recent visit of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.

India Working Towards Return of Workers to UAE Post Covid-19

December 01, 2020, The Economic Times

The Government of India is actively working towards the return of its workers back to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain who had lost their jobs and had to be evacuated to India during the Covid pandemic earlier this year.
United States

Trump ‘confirms he’ll run for president again in 2024’ in public for first time

December 3, 2020, Independent

Donald Trump has finally confirmed in public for the first time that he wants to run for the presidency again in 2024, something that he has been discussing for weeks in private, even as he has still not formally conceded the 2020 race.

US-China relations: Joe Biden says trade war tariffs to remain in place for now as alliance building comes first

December 2, 2020, South China Morning Post

Biden confirmed that he will not make any “immediate moves” to lift the tariffs on imports of Chinese goods before a full review of the existing phase one trade deal and consultations with US allies, despite China’s hopes that it would be able to renegotiate the trade agreement with the new US administration.

U.S. Boosts China Spying Budget to Meet Growing Economic, National-Security Threat

December 3, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

The U.S. is increasing the portion of the spying budget devoted to China by nearly one-fifth this year, U.S. officials said, reflecting rising concern over what the Trump administration says is a top economic, security and counterintelligence threat from Beijing.

Compromise defence bill confronts a rising China

December 4, 2020, Defense News

Eyeing China’s rise as a global military and economic power, lawmakers unveiled a compromise defence policy bill that targets China on multiple fronts, with $6.9 billion prescribed for a new Pacific Deterrence Initiative over two years.

Threat to remove Chinese firms from Wall Street is now on Trump’s desk

December 3, 2020, CNN

The US government is just one step away from enacting a law that could kick several Chinese firms off Wall Street, further escalating tensions between Washington and Beijing.
Congress Moves to Block Trump's Troop Cuts in Germany
December 3, 2020, The Wall Street Journal
Congress moved to stop President Trump from reducing U.S. troops in Germany, dealing a setback to the White House's attempt to punish the country for its modest level of defense spending.

Senate Passes Bill to Clear Green-Card Backlog for Indian Immigrants
December 3, 2020, The Wall Street Journal
The Senate unanimously passed a bill late aimed at clearing a backlog of green cards for primarily Indian immigrants, after more than a year of wrangling following House passage of a similar bill in 2019.

Senate to vote on banning $23 billion UAE arms sales next week
December 3, 2020, Defense News
The Senate will vote next week on legislation to halt the Trump administration’s $23 billion sale of F-35 fighter jets, Reaper drones and munitions to the United Arab Emirates, a lawmaker said.

Sanctioning Turkey over the S-400 would be mandatory in new defence bill
December 4, 2020, Defense News
The final version of the must-pass annual defence policy bill unveiled mandates the U.S. president sanction Turkey for its acquisition of the S-400 air missile defense system.

US and Turkey target each other in NATO meeting
December 1, 2020, Politico
Outgoing U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo slammed Turkey during a virtual meeting of NATO foreign ministers, accusing Ankara of stoking tensions with fellow allies in the Mediterranean and of giving a gift to the Kremlin by purchasing a Russian-made anti-aircraft system.

Biden Wants America to Lead the World. It Shouldn’t.
U.S. “leadership” is a favourite trope of the foreign policy establishment. It's outdated and dangerous.
Europe & Russia

Europe

**EU-UK trade deal hangs in the balance with four weeks to go**
December 3, 2020, Reuters

The European Union and Britain talked into late to try to secure a Brexit trade deal, with an EU official saying an agreement was closer than ever but a UK government source warning chances for a breakthrough were receding.

**France Floats Veto Threat on Brexit Deal as EU Feels Strain**
December 2, 2020, Bloomberg

France warned it could veto a trade deal between the U.K. and the European Union if it doesn't like the terms, piling pressure on the EU negotiating team not to make further concessions as talks build to a climax.

**EU vows to crack down on disinformation targeting democracies**
December 3, 2020, Deutsche Welle

The European Commission has said that it will look to “impose a cost” on those who spread fake news. A draft law will be unveiled next year by the European Commission to limit the influence of state actors on elections in Europe.

**France cracks down on 76 mosques suspected of ‘separatism’**
December 3, 2020, The Guardian

France’s interior minister has announced a crackdown on 76 mosques that the government suspects of “separatism” and encouraging extremism.

**Covid-19: Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine judged safe for use in UK**
December 3, 2020, BBC

The UK has become the first country in the world to approve the Pfizer/BioNTech coronavirus vaccine, paving the way for mass vaccination.

**Biden Is Good News For Europe, But China Challenges Await**
November 30, 2020, NPR

President-elect Joe Biden has chosen a national security team that backs traditional U.S. alliances, which has been met with relief in much of Europe after nearly four years of hostility from President Trump.
Russia

Russia moves to expel American human rights activist
December 3, 2020, The Guardian
A prominent US human rights activist faces expulsion from Russia as it ratchets up pressure on non-governmental organisations fighting abuses, particularly those who receive financial support from abroad.

Moldova’s new president calls for Russian troops to withdraw from territory
December 1, 2020, BBC
Moldova’s incoming president Maia Sandu has called for the withdrawal of Russian troops from a breakaway region at the border with Ukraine.

Russian radars track 30 foreign spy planes and six drones over week
December 4, 2020, Tass
Russian radars tracked 36 foreign aircraft that conducted air reconnaissance near Russia’s state border over the past week, the Russian Defense Ministry’s Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper reported.

Over 50 Russian Baltic Fleet ships hold anti-saboteur defence drills
December 3, 2020, Tass
Over 50 Baltic Fleet ships and support vessels are involved in drills running at their naval bases, the Fleet’s press office reported.

Russian Pacific Fleet warships wrap up visit to Sri Lanka
December 3, 2020, Tass
Russian Pacific Fleet warships wrap A group has wrapped up its business call at Sri Lanka, the Fleet’s press office reported after visit to Sri Lanka.

Sputnik V vaccine: Russian President Putin plans mass vaccinations against Covid-19 next week
December 2, 2020, Livemint
Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered authorities to begin mass vaccinations with the Sputnik V vaccine against the novel coronavirus from next week as the country recorded 589 new daily deaths from Covid-19.
Africa & Latin America

Latin America

Bolsonaro will wait “a little bit longer” to recognise a winner in the US election
November 30, 2020, Merco Press

Brazil’s president Jair Bolsonaro said he will wait “a little bit longer” to recognise a winner in the U.S. presidential election, suggesting there was evidence of fraud in the process.

Bolivia announces policies to stimulate economic growth
December 3, 2020, Prensa Latina

Bolivian authorities announced some initiatives to stimulate economic growth next year, in an area stagnant due to the effects of Covid-19 and the mismanagement of the previous coup government.

US sanctions Chinese company supporting Venezuela’s Nicolas Maduro
December 1, 2020, Merco Press

The United States imposed sanctions on Chinese firm China National Electronics Import & Export Corporation (CEIEC), accusing it of supporting Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro efforts to undermine democracy.

Venezuelan Ambassador to the UN Denounces US Boycott Attempt
December 3, 2020, Prensa Latina

The Venezuelan ambassador to the United Nations (UN), Samuel Moncada, denounced that the United States promotes false news about his country as a desperate action to boycott the legislative elections.

Venezuela ratifies proposals for oil market recovery
December 3, 2020, Prensa Latina

Venezuela ratified the Declaration of Cooperation of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) for the recovery of the market and the economies.

President of Peru warns about risks of transition process
December 3, 2020, Prensa Latina

Peruvian President Francisco Sagasti warned about the risks of greater instability if the country ventures into a new change of government, a few months before the election of a new president.
Africa

**Is Egypt's army adapting to growing regional and domestic threats?**
December 3, 2020, The Africa Report

The Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) training schedule has been quite busy these past few years. Once a conventional army, it is now undergoing drastic change under the leadership of President Fattah al-Sisi as it responds to shifting dynamics across the region as well as its own internal and external threats. How is the EAF's military strategy evolving in this context? How is it affecting alliances? These have been discussed in the report.

**Interpol Raises the Alarm Over Fake Covid-19 Vaccines in Nigeria, Others**
December 3, 2020, All Africa

The International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL) has alerted Nigeria, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, and 190 other countries of threat from organised criminal groups during the upcoming COVID-19 vaccination campaigns, including fake vaccines and the theft of supplies.

**Egypt, Italy Sign 20 Deals for Debt Swap for Development**
December 3, 2020, All Africa

Egypt and Italy have signed 20 deals for exchanging debts for development, Minister of International Cooperation Rania el Mashat said.

**‘The Unfolding Conflict in Ethiopia’ - Rep. Smith's hearing statement on Ethiopian crisis**
December 3, 2020, All Africa

Excerpts of remarks by Representative Chris Smith (R-NJ) at a hearing of the House Africa Subcommittee on the crisis in Ethiopia held on December 3, have been given in this report.

**Ethiopia and UN 'reach Tigray aid deal'**
December 3, 2020, BBC

The UN and Ethiopia have agreed to allow aid into the country's conflict-torn Tigray region, UN officials say. UN spokesman Saviano Abreu said an assessment mission would begin later. There has been no word so far from the Ethiopian government.
High Expectations for the Next AU Commission Chair

December 2, 2020, All Africa

African leaders are set to elect a new African Union Commission (AUC) at the continental body’s next ordinary summit early in 2021. At the top of the commission’s hierarchy is the chairperson, a key position occupied since January 2017 by Chad’s former foreign minister, Moussa Faki Mahamat.

UK deploys 300 troops to Mali

December 4, 2020, Africa News

The United Kingdom will deploy 300 troops to Mali this week as part of the UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSMA), the British Ministry of Defense announced.