

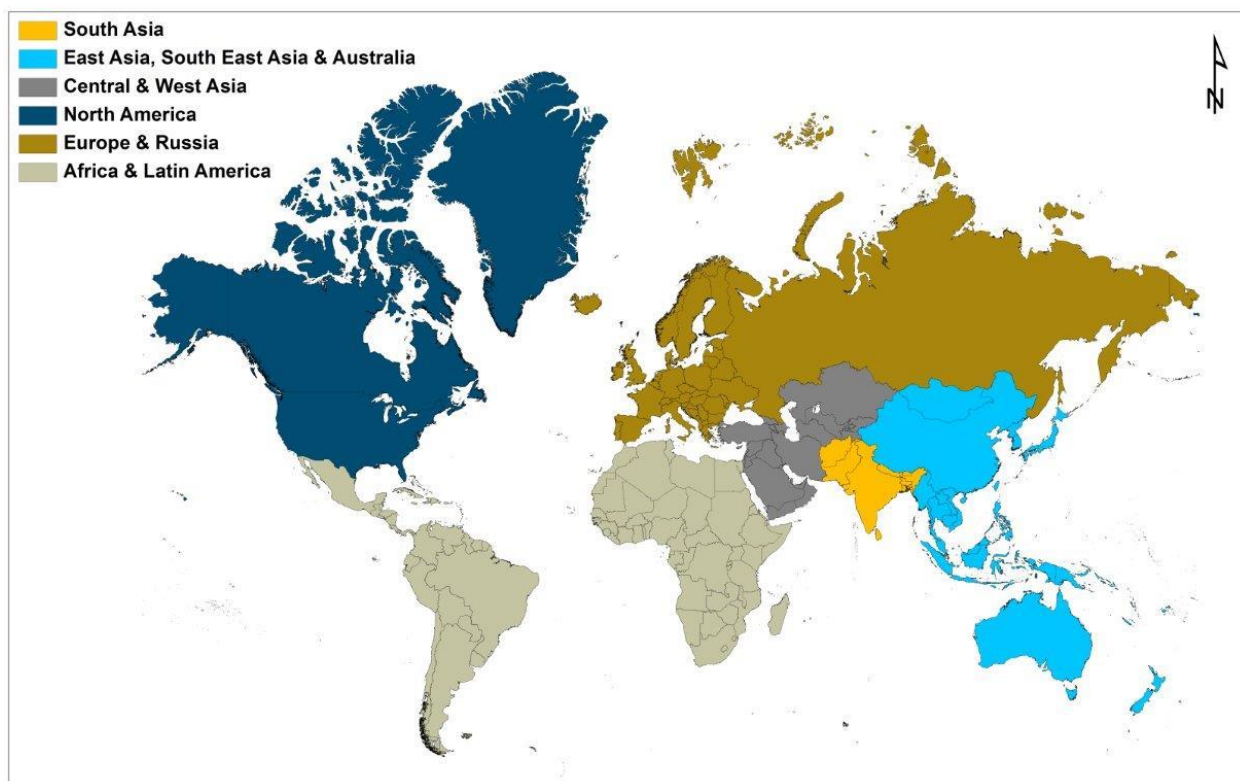


Delhi Policy Group

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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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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DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

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South Asia

India

[India, China agreed that next round of military talks should be held soon: MEA](#)

India and China have agreed that the next round of military talks should be held soon for working towards an "early and complete" disengagement of troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh in accordance with the existing bilateral agreements and protocols, the ministry of external affairs said.

[For total disengagement, India wants military commanders' meet with China at 'early date'](#)

December 24, 2020, Hindustan Times

India on Thursday again called for the holding of the next meeting of Indian and Chinese military commanders at an "early date" so that the two sides can work towards the complete disengagement of troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

[Cabinet approves signing of revised air service agreements with Afghanistan, Philippines](#)

December 23, 2020, The Print

The official statement said the revised air services agreement signifies an important landmark in the civil aviation relations between India and the two countries.

[Army's proposed 'Tour of Duty' recruitment model could be expanded to Navy and IAF too](#)

December 23, 2020, The Print

Months after it was first proposed by the Army, India's defence establishment is actively considering expanding the scope of the 'Tour of Duty' model of recruitment to the Air Force and Navy as well.

[India to beef up security at Pangong Tso, govt fast-tracks procurement of patrol vessels](#)

December 24, 2020, The Print

With summers expected to heighten tensions in eastern Ladakh, the government has fast-tracked the construction of 12 indigenous fast patrol vessels with specialised capabilities to counter Chinese boats in the Pangong Tso.

[F/A-18 operation on Indian carriers successfully demonstrated: Boeing](#)

December 21, 2020, The Hindu

Boeing on Monday announced the successful demonstration of the compatibility of its F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jets with the Indian Navy's aircraft carriers as part of its pitch for the Navy's fighter procurement.

[India's New Maritime Theater Command: A Quantum Leap](#)

December 23, 2020, The Diplomat

The new command will help India maintain a favorable maritime balance of power when it comes to China.

Pakistan

[Govt arranges 12 LNG cargoes for January](#)

December 20, 2020, The News

The government has procured 12 cargoes of liquefied natural gas to meet growing energy demand next month following temperature drops in winters. The ministry of energy's spokesperson said the country will be moving 30 percent more LNG this January compared to January 2019 at the cheapest ever price of \$6.34 / million metric British thermal unit for a peak winter month.

[UAE tells Pakistan visa ban 'temporary'](#)

December 20, 2020, The Express Tribune

Pakistan finally acknowledged that the United Arab Emirates imposed "temporary restrictions" on visas due to outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, days after Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi visited the Gulf state to take up the issue with the UAE authorities.

[Two Chinese firms to invest in RRUDP](#)

December 20, 2020, The Express Tribune

Two Chinese companies signed a memorandum of understanding for investment of billions of dollars in the Ravi Riverfront Urban Development Project (RRUDP). China Road and Bridging Company (CRBC), a member of the 4C conglomerate, and Gezhouba Group Company Limited (CGGC), had signed the MoUs. Delegations of both companies visited the RUDA headquarters to sign the agreements.

[China seeks additional guarantees for \\$6b new loan](#)

December 23, 2020, The Express Tribune

China has sought additional guarantees before sanctioning \$6 billion loan for Main Line-1 (ML-1) project due to weakening financial position of Pakistan and also proposed a mix of commercial and concessional loan against Islamabad's desire to secure the cheapest lending. The issue of additional guarantees was raised during the third joint ML-1 financing committee meeting. The Chinese authorities asked for additional guarantee mechanism after Islamabad sought debt relief from G-20 countries, which was only meant for poorest nations of the world.

[Foreign exchange: SBP reserves fall \\$83m to \\$13.2b](#)

December 24, 2020, The Express Tribune

The foreign exchange reserves held by the central bank declined 0.62% on a weekly basis. On December 18, the foreign currency reserves held by the SBP were recorded at \$13,216.2 million, down \$83 million compared with \$13,298.8 million in the previous week.

[Pakistan faces another setback in Reko Diq case](#)

December 24, 2020, The Express Tribune

Pakistan is facing another setback on the international legal front as the British Virgin Islands high court has passed an order to attach some of its assets due to Pakistan's failure to provide bank guarantee to an international arbitrator in the Reko Diq case. The high court of the British Virgin Islands passed an ex parte order on December 16 regarding the attachment of Pakistani assets. In view of that order, Pakistan cannot sell the assets managed by offshore companies registered in this small overseas territory of the United Kingdom.

Afghanistan

[Armed by Iran, 2,000 Afghans Still in Syria: Zarif](#)

December 21, 2020, Tolo News

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, said that 2,000 Afghans are still fighting in Syria and that Iran would be willing to arm more in the fight against Daesh if the Afghan government was willing.

[Abdullah Flies to Tajikistan to Discuss Afghan Peace](#)

December 21, 2020, Tolo News

Abdullah Abdullah, the chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, visited Tajikistan on December 21 to discuss the Afghan peace process. He was accompanied by a high-level delegation.

[Mullah Baradar: Taliban Meets in Pakistan Over Peace Talks](#)

December 22, 2020, Tolo News

The Taliban's deputy leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar has said that all decisions about the peace process are being finalized in consultation with the Taliban's leadership and the Taliban's cleric council in Pakistan. Baradar made the remarks while visiting wounded members of the Taliban in the Pakistan city of Karachi, saying that the Taliban's leadership exists in Pakistan.

[Afghanistan invited for second India, Uzbek, Iran trilateral meet on Chabahar](#)

December 24, 2020, WION

Afghanistan has been invited for second India, Uzbekistan, and Iran trilateral meet on the use of the Chabahar port. Earlier this month, the first meet took place at the deputy minister level between the 3 countries. The next meeting will be hosted by India with the dates in the process of finalization.

Bangladesh

[Bangladeshi foreign policy on China, India, and the US](#)

December 22, 2020, Dhaka Tribune

With rising tension between China and India, new Chinese investment deals in Bangladesh have stirred up a media storm all around India, roping the United States into the picture to grab Bangladesh's attention. However, the harshest of criticisms regarding Chinese investments in Bangladesh overlooks Dhaka's ability to look out for its national interests.

[India, Bangladesh finalising first bilateral rice deal in 3 years](#)

December 24, 2020, The Hindu

Bangladesh is finalising a purchase of 150,000 tonnes of rice from India's NAFED, the New Delhi-based state agency told Reuters, in what would be the first such bilateral deal in three years after floods in Bangladesh sent local prices to a record high.

[India-Bangladesh DG-level border talks: BSF, BGB agree on Intel sharing](#)

December 23, 2020, Northeast Now

The Border Security Force (BSF) and the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) have agreed to share intelligence to combat trans-border crimes including terrorism and insurgency.

Nepal

[Chinese envoy meets Prachanda amid political crisis in Nepal](#)

December 24, 2020, The Indian Express

Chinese ambassador Hou Yanqi met Nepal Communist Party's executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', who claims control over the ruling party after removing Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli from the posts of the party's parliamentary leader and chair.

[India Says Political Developments in Nepal "Internal Matter"](#)

December 24, 2020, NDTV

India described Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's sudden decision to dissolve Parliament and call for fresh elections as an "internal matter" that is for the country to decide as per its democratic processes.

Bhutan

[Bhutan: India First, But Not India Alone?](#)

December 25, 2020, The Diplomat

While slowly diversifying its basket of economic and diplomatic relationships, Bhutan continues to remain a steadfast Indian ally.

Sri Lanka

[EU grants Euro 18 million to assist legislature of Sri Lanka](#)

December 23, 2020, Colombo Page

The European Union has agreed upon a grant of Euro 18 million to implement a project to assist Sri Lanka's legislature.

[Sri Lanka facing the new Cold War in the Indo-Pacific theatre](#)

December 20, 2020, ORF

At present, albeit in a different context, there is another westward strategy from the Eastern Pacific theatre. It is that of the US Pacific Command (USPACOM) in Hawaii along with Japan, Australia and other like-minded allies who subscribe to 'shared values' of a rules-based order, against a rising China – where Sri Lankan geolocation is revisited with its strategic importance.

East & South East Asia

China

[Laos gets its first expressway with Chinese help](#)

December 24, 2020, Guangming

The opening of the Vientiane-Vangvieng section of the China-Laos expressway gives Laos its first expressway. The China-Laos expressway runs from Bohan Port in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan province, to Vientiane, Laos, with a total length of 440 kilometers. Once completed, driving time between the two places will be reduced from 20 hours to 5 hours.

[China Coast Guard conducts joint Beibu Gulf patrol with Vietnamese counterpart](#)

December 25, 2020, People's Daily

The China Coast Guard (CCG) and its Vietnamese counterpart carried out a joint patrol in the Beibu Gulf.

[China-Turkey extradition bill likely to focus on counter-terrorism cooperation, experts say](#)

December 24, 2020, Global Times

China is eyeing an extradition treaty with Turkey which experts believe will promote bilateral judicial cooperation and facilitate cracking down on transnational crimes, including terrorism.

[China-Russia strategic ties to be strengthened, sending strong signal to new US govt](#)

December 23, 2020, Global Times

China and Russia recently sent strong messages, through moves such as having joint aerial strategic patrols and criticizing US unilateralism together, to the US when the Trump administration is setting obstacles for the incoming Biden government to repair US relations with other countries.

[China to extend tariff exemptions on 6 types of US goods for another year starting Saturday](#)

December 25, 2020, Global Times

China to extend tariff exemptions on the first batch of US products hit by China's retaliatory tariff list against US Section 301 probe on China for another year starting Saturday. The products on the list include 6 items such as oil and chemicals.

[China reiterates 'joint efforts' in concluding China-EU investment treaty: FM](#)

December 25, 2020, Global Times

China has again stressed that "joint efforts" are needed to achieve a China-EU bilateral investment treaty (BIT), also called the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI), calling on each side to meet each other halfway, as the pact will provide more opportunities and good institutional guarantees for bilateral investment.

[Tech Giants Are Giving China A Vital Edge in Espionage](#)

December 23, 2020, Foreign Policy

In 2017, as U.S. President Donald Trump began his trade war with China, another battle raged behind the scenes. The simmering, decadelong conflict over data between Chinese and U.S. intelligence agencies was heating up, driven both by the ambitions of an increasingly confident Beijing and by the conviction of key players in the new administration in Washington that China was presenting an economic, political, and national security challenge on a scale the United States had not faced for decades—if ever.

[Beijing's Collision With Christians](#)

December 21, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

With the European Parliament threatening to block an investment deal with China over persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang, the shock waves released by Beijing's Hong Kong crackdown still reverberating, and the debate over the next U.S. administration's China policy heating up, this would seem like a bad time for Beijing to kick off another major international dustup over human rights. This is bad news for China's Christians, who face growing hostility from a ruling party that until a few years ago was willing to turn a blind eye to the proliferation of unofficial "house churches" across the country.

[China has opened a new front in its criminal war against Muslims in western China](#)

December 20, 2020, The Washington Post

Chinese Authorities are coercing hundreds of thousands of rural workers to carry out the grueling labor of handpicking cotton in the heavily Uighur areas of southern Xinjiang province, subjecting them to harsh recruiting, supervision, surveillance and indoctrination. This disturbing practice is disclosed in a new report from Adrian Zenz, who earlier helped bring to light the construction of an archipelago of involuntary internment centers for ethnic Uighurs, Kazakhs and other Muslim minorities. The cotton harvest is another window on China's efforts to erase the Uighurs' traditional mind-set and ways of life.

[A Farewell to the Hong Kong I Loved](#)

December 22, 2020, Bloomberg

So we come to the close of a tumultuous year. Jimmy Lai is in prison, along with Joshua Wong and other activist leaders; even moderate pro-democracy politicians are fleeing abroad. The handover that everyone feared, the driver of the frenetic activity that I saw in 1992, has finally arrived. It just came 23 years later than many people expected. In retrospect, the past two-and-a-bit decades seem like an interregnum, an unofficial extension before the new power declared itself.

[China's economy set to overtake US earlier due to covid-19 fallout](#)

December 26, 2020, LiveMint

The Chinese economy is set to overtake the U.S. faster than previously anticipated after weathering the coronavirus pandemic better than the West, according to the Centre for Economics and Business Research. The world's biggest and second-biggest economies are on course to trade places in dollar terms in 2028, five years earlier than expected a year ago, it said on Saturday.

Japan

[Japan to help build giant methane production plant in China](#)

December 20, 2020, Nikkei Asia

Japan and China will launch a joint project to create one of the world's largest methane production facilities in northern China that reuses carbon dioxide and surplus hydrogen.

[Japan to develop longer-range anti-ship missiles as China pressure mounts](#)

December 19, 2020, Japan Today

Japan said it will develop new "stand-off" anti-ship missiles that can target warships at greater distances around its southwestern Okinawa island chain, including near disputed islets in the East China Sea that China also claims.

[Japan aims to conclude talks on cost-sharing for U.S. troops soon](#)

December 22, 2020, Japan Today

Japan aims to conclude talks with the United States on a fresh cost-sharing agreement for hosting of American troops at an early date, Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said

[India, Japan discuss regional security; call for free, open maritime order](#)

December 22, 2020, Business Standard

In the backdrop of China's growing assertiveness in the region, India and Japan strongly opposed any attempts to "unilaterally change" the status quo by "coercion" or any activities that escalate tension and highlighted the importance of a free and open maritime order.

[Japan's Cabinet approves record defence budget](#)

December 21, 2020, Deutsche Welle

Japan's Cabinet has approved a record 5.34 trillion yen (\$51.7 billion/€42.4 billion) defence budget for the fiscal year 2021.

Korea

[Ruling party chief expresses regret over criticism of new law banning anti-Pyongyang leaflets](#)

December 21, 2020, The Korea Times

Ruling Democratic Party (DP) Chairman Rep. Lee Nak-yeon on Monday voiced his regret over growing criticism that the new law banning the launching of anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border runs afoul of the right to freedom of expression.

[North Korean leader tightens control amid faltering economy](#)

November 20, 2020, The Korea Times

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has stepped up a wide range of efforts to strengthen his grip on power, as the reclusive state's current unfavorable conditions, dented by COVID-19 and its bleak economy, are feared to pose a threat to the regime's survival.

[S. Korea conducted Dokdo defence drill earlier this month](#)

December 25, 2020, The Korea Herald

South Korea staged an annual military exercise on and around its easternmost islets of Dokdo earlier this month, sources said.

[South Korea signs deals to purchase vaccines from Janssen, Pfizer](#)

December 24, 2020, The Korea Herald

South Korea has signed deals with Johnson & Johnson's Janssen and Pfizer to purchase COVID-19 vaccines, with a goal of starting vaccinations in the second quarter of 2021, health authorities said.

[S. Korea to expand transfer of defence technology for commercial purposes](#)

December 24, 2020, The Korea Herald

The government will significantly expand the transfer of defence technologies to the private sector to help companies take advantage of them to develop new non-military products, the arms procurement agency said.

[US says it supports S. Korea's concern over Chinese, Russian violation of KADIZ](#)

December 24, 2020, The Korea Herald

The US State Department expressed strong support for South Korea and its efforts to defend its air space on Wednesday, one day after more than a dozen Chinese and Russian aircraft entered the country's air defence identification zone (KADIZ).

Southeast Asia

[Quad senior officials' meet: Appreciated Vietnamese chairmanship of ASEAN](#)

December 22, 2020, The Times of India

Senior Officials of India, US, Japan and Australia met virtually on 18th December to work out plans for practical cooperation in areas like connectivity, infrastructure and security under a collective objective of promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. This was a follow up of the Foreign Ministers' meet of the four countries meeting in Tokyo on the 6th October 2020.

[India sends warship to deliver aid to Vietnam, conduct exercise in South China Sea](#)

December 24, 2020, Hindustan Times

The visit by the corvette INS Kiltan is also aimed at enhancing maritime cooperation between the two navies and contributing to regional security and stability. On its departure from Ho Chi Minh City, the warship will undertake a "passing exercise" with the Vietnam People's Navy in South China Sea during December 26-27.

[India Challenges Vodafone Arbitration Ruling In Singapore](#)

December 24, 2020, NDTV Profit

The international arbitration tribunal at the Hague had ruled that the Indian government's imposition of a tax liability on Vodafone was in breach of the investment treaty agreement between India and the Netherlands.

[China builds 2000-km high-tech border fence, Myanmar unhappy](#)

December 24, 2020, Business Standard

China's plan to construct a 2000-km high-tech border fence on its southern border has riled Myanmar. China argues that the fence will curb coronavirus spread by stopping illegal border crossings. The generals in Naypyitaw will have none of that. On the contrary, the Myanmar military has accused China of violating the 1961 border pact.

[Security concerns on Myanmar border delaying vital project linking Kolkata to Mizoram, says home ministry](#)

December 24, 2020, India Today

The Indian Union home ministry has listed security concerns and lack of access as the reasons for the delay in the mega-infrastructure project for enhancing connectivity to the north-east linking Kolkata to Mizoram via Sitwe port.

[Indonesia Quietly Advances Economic, Cultural Ties with Taiwan](#)

December 23, 2020, The Diplomat

Despite the country's growing dependence on China, connections with Taiwan have persisted – even grown.

[China sends second ship to trial amid rising tensions in South China Sea](#)

December 24, 2020, New York Post

China's navy has started trials on its second trademark warship as tensions between the Communist nation and the US continue to rise in the fiercely contested South China Sea.

Central & West Asia

Central Asia

[India-Iran-Uzbekistan Pursue Central Asian Connectivity](#)

December 18, 2020, The Diplomat

The Iranian port of Chabahar has the potential to shift some of the regional dynamics in India's favour.

[Uzbekistan plans to attract \\$7.5 billion in foreign direct investments in 2021](#)

December 24, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

On December 23, Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev held an executive meeting to discuss the effectiveness of works in investments and foreign trade, and identify key tasks for 2021, the presidential website reported.

[Afghanistan's Abdullah, Tajikistan president discuss Afghan peace process](#)

December 23, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

The chairman of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation, Abdullah Abdullah, on December 22 held talks with Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon and other top officials in the Tajik capital.

[Pioneering solar power plant to be built in Uzbekistan](#)

December 23, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

The World Bank Group, Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company PJSC (Masdar), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of Uzbekistan on December 22 signed loan and guarantee agreements to finance the first 100-megawatt solar photovoltaic power plant in the country.

[Climate diplomacy and security project launched for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan](#)

December 18, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

On December 17, a presentation of a project on climate diplomacy and security in Central Asia was held in Bishkek. The project is being implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in cooperation with relevant government agencies in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan with the support of the UK Government.

West Asia

[Trump Administration Pushing USD500 Million Arms Sale to Riyadh: Reports](#)

December 24, 2020, AL Jazeera

Donald Trump's administration plans to authorise the sale of nearly \$500m in weapons to Saudi Arabia before the United States president leaves the White House, US media outlets have reported.

[President Trump Warns Iran of Retaliation after Attacks on U.S. Embassy in Baghdad](#)

December 23, 2020, The New York Times

President Trump warned Iran on Wednesday (December 23) that he would hold it accountable "if one American is killed" in rocket attacks in Iraq that the Trump administration and military officials blamed on Tehran.

[India to Invite Afghanistan to Next Meet on Chabahar Port](#)

December 24, 2020, Deccan Herald

Afghanistan will be invited to the next meeting of India, Iran and Uzbekistan on joint use of strategically-located Chabahar port, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday (December 24).

[India, Israel to Share Know-how on Building Climate Resilient Infrastructure](#)

December 21, 2020, Business Standard

India and Israel on Monday (December 21) signed an agreement to cooperate in the fields of health and medicine, including sharing of expertise in building climate resilient infrastructure and support to 'green healthcare'.

[Israel Deploys Submarine to Persian Gulf in Message of Deterrence to Iran](#)

December 23, 2020, The Washington Post

An Israeli submarine has embarked for the Persian Gulf in possible preparation for any Iranian retaliation over the November assassination of a senior Iranian nuclear scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, Israeli media reported.

[Israel Launches First-ever Multitier Missile Defense Test](#)

December 17, 2020, Defense News

The Israel Missile Defense Organization and the U.S. Missile Defense Agency for the first time demonstrated a multilayered air defense system using the Iron Dome, David's Sling and Arrow weapon systems in a recent series of tests.

[Microsoft Says Cyber Assault on U.S. Hit 40 of Its Customers, Including in Israel](#)

December 18, 2020, The Times of Israel

Microsoft said Thursday (December 17) that dozens of its customers, including firms in Israel and the United Arab Emirates, were targeted as part of the massive cyber-assault on US government institutions that was uncovered this week. The tech giant called for a “global cybersecurity response” following the attack, and singled out Israel’s private sector as a potential source of threats.

United States

United States

[President Trump's 11th-Hour Pardons and Commutations](#)

December 23, 2020, US News

Less than a month before leaving the White House, President Donald Trump went on a pardon spree, issuing more than a dozen on Tuesday and commuting the sentences of another five individuals.

[Acting defence Secretary Miller Visits Afghanistan Amid U.S. Withdrawal](#)

December 22, 2020, US News

The visit, which the defence Department kept confidential for safety concerns, comes amid a worsening security situation in Afghanistan, and in the aftermath of President Donald Trump's lame-duck order to halve the number of U.S. forces there down to 2,500 by the week before President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration. It also follows fears by those who spent much of the last two decades overseeing the war that U.S. defeat there is inevitable.

[Pompeo Weighs Genocide Designation for China](#)

December 23, 2020, Foreign Policy

U. S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has ordered a review to determine whether China's repression of ethnic Uighurs in Xinjiang amounts to genocide, several officials and people familiar with the matter said, raising expectations that America's top diplomat may charge China with committing genocide before he leaves office next month.

[US lawmakers block Trump's requested changes on Covid-19 relief bill](#)

December 24, 2020, Hindustan Times

Republicans and Democrats in the US House of Representatives on Thursday blocked attempts to alter a \$2.3 trillion coronavirus aid and government spending package, leaving its status in doubt after President Donald Trump demanded extensive changes to the legislation.

[Donald Trump vetoes sweeping US defence bill](#)

December 24, 2020, Hindustan Times

US President Donald Trump vetoed a broad defence funding bill sent to him by Congress Wednesday, complaining that it helps Russia and China and objecting to provisions to rename military bases.

[America denies China expelled US Navy warship near Spratly Islands](#)

December 23, 2020, Hindustan Times

China falsely claimed that it expelled an American warship from the South China Sea (SCS) on Tuesday, the US Navy has said, adding that Beijing's statement was an effort to assert its illegitimate claims in the maritime region.

[All U.K. air travellers to U.S. need negative Covid tests as mutant virus emerges. CDC says](#)

December 25, 2020, NBC News

The U.S. will require all air passengers arriving from the United Kingdom to test negative for Covid-19 before their departure after the identification in the U.K. of new coronavirus variants.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced the change , saying in a statement that President Donald Trump would sign an order Friday to take effect Monday.

Europe & Russia

Europe

[Russia announces travel bans against EU officials in response to Navalny sanctions](#)

December 22, 2020, CNN

Russia has announced it is hitting several European Union representatives with tit-for-tat sanctions in response to those imposed by the bloc over the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny.

[France says it will reopen UK border -- with conditions](#)

December 22, 2020, CNN

France and the UK moved closer to a deal on Tuesday that would allow some personal travel and thousands of stalled freight trucks to resume movement between both countries.

[EU to spend hundreds of millions more on refugees in Turkey](#)

December 23, 2020, Euro News

The European Union plans to spend hundreds of millions of euros over the next year helping refugees living in Turkey, most of them people who fled the war in Syria.

[Brexit deal: what changed on key issues to get the agreement?](#)

December 24, 2020, Euro News

Britain and the European Union on Thursday reached an agreement on their post-Brexit relationship after both sides gave ground on some of the thorniest issues.

[Prosperity After Brexit](#)

December 24, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

Brexit came down to the wire but it arrived Thursday, with a new trade deal between the United Kingdom and European Union. Arguments about whether this is a good or bad deal for either side matter less than the fact that British voters have finally received what they voted for in 2016. Britain left the European Union on Jan. 31 and has been in a transitional period applying most EU economic regulations. The new deal governs trading rules when the transition ends on Dec. 31. The agreement provides for zero-tariff, zero-quota trade in goods and allows trade in some services to continue with minimal restriction

[Is France Capable of Being an Indo-Pacific Power?](#)

December 24, 2020, The Diplomat

France is rarely mentioned as an important actor in the Indo-Pacific, but its vast EEZ in the region underpins its interests.

[Spain to keep negotiating on Gibraltar border after Brexit deal](#)

December 24, 2020, Reuters

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Madrid and London would continue to negotiate an agreement on the British territory of Gibraltar on the Iberian Peninsula after the Brexit trade deal clinched with the European Union.

[EU-China investment deal hits a snag as US exerts pressure](#)

December 22, 2020, Politico

The chances of China and the European Union concluding a landmark investment deal before the end of the year appear to be diminishing, as opposition grows, including from the U.S., to any agreement that fails to tackle the issue of forced labor.

Russia

[CAR rebels seize Bambari city, Russia confirms sending military](#)

December 22, 2020, Al Jazeera

Rebels in the Central African Republic have seized Bambari, the country's fourth-largest city, five days before nationwide elections, according to the local mayor, government and UN sources.

[India-Russia summit postponed due to Covid, no other reason – MEA, Russian envoy.](#)

December 24, 2020, The Print

MEA and Russian envoy Nikolay Kudashev react to ThePrint report that said India-Russia annual summit was postponed for 1st time in 2 decades amid Moscow's unease with Quad.

[Russia envoy: S-400 deal advancing... don't recognise unilateral sanctions](#)

December 22, 2020, The Indian Express

The implementation of the ongoing Russia-India defence deals, including the supply of a batch of S-400 missile systems, is advancing well despite the threat of US sanctions, the Russian embassy in Delhi said.

[Russia committed to develop ties with Pakistan, India shouldn't have any concerns](#)

December 21, 2020, Hindustan Times

Russia on Monday said it is committed to developing its relationship with Pakistan, though India should have no concern about such moves as they are within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and aimed at ensuring regional stability.

[Russia understands India's vision of Indo-Pacific, has concerns about Quad: Russian diplomats](#)

December 21, 2020, Hindustan Times

Russia understands and supports India's inclusive vision of the Indo-Pacific based on international law but has concerns about the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad that could jeopardise regional cooperation, the two top Russian diplomats in New Delhi said.

[Russia working with India to jointly produce Sputnik V vax: Russian envoy](#)

December 21, 2020, Business Standard

Russia is working with India to jointly produce Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine at Dr Reddy's Laboratories for use in India, Russia and other countries, said Nikolay Kudashev, Russian Ambassador to India.

[Vladimir Putin Signs Bill Giving Russian Presidents Lifetime Immunity](#)

December 22, 2020, NDTV

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed legislation that will grant former presidents lifetime immunity once they leave office.

[No difficulties for Russia under Joe Biden presidency: Vladimir Putin](#)

December 24, 2020, Business Standard

Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the situation will not get worse for Russia during the Biden administration.

[Russian and Chinese bombers fly joint patrol over Pacific](#)

December 22, 2020, Associated Press

Russian and Chinese bombers flew a joint patrol mission over the Western Pacific in a show of increasingly close military ties between Moscow and Beijing.

Africa & Latin America

Latin America

[Argentina authorizes Sputnik V vaccine](#)

December 24, 2020, Merco Press

Argentina's health ministry said on Wednesday it has given the controversial Russian Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine "emergency" authorization, making the country the first in Latin America to do so.

[Chinese vaccine 50% effective, reports Sao Paulo lab, but half of Brazilians reject inoculation](#)

December 24, 2020, Merco Press

Brazilian researchers said the COVID-19 vaccine developed by China's Sinovac Biotech is more than 50% effective based on trial data, but again withheld full results at the company's request, raising questions about transparency.

[Colombia to begin mass vaccination in February](#)

December 23, 2020, Merco Press

Colombia plans to launch a mass vaccination campaign against the novel coronavirus in February, President Ivan Duque announced. In an interview with a local radio station, Duque said a trial vaccination run could begin between this week and the first week of January.

[Workers strike in Argentine ports disrupting wheat millers' operations in Brazil](#)

December 22, 2020, Merco Press

The prolongation of a workers' strike in the ports of Argentina may disrupt wheat millers' operations in Brazil, especially if the labour action is not called off before the end of the year, industry representatives were quoted in the Brazilian media.

[Brazilian senate approves bill facilitating purchase of rural properties by foreign companies](#)

December 19, 2020, Merco Press

The Brazilian Senate unexpectedly approved a bill this week to facilitate the purchase and leasing of rural properties in Brazil by foreign nationals or foreign companies. The legislation must be approved by the lower house of Congress before the president can sign it into law.

[Chilean army base in Antarctica detects 36 positive Covid-19 cases; Navy support vessel blamed](#)

December 22, 2020, Merco Press

A coronavirus outbreak with 36 positive tests was reported at a Chilean Army base in Antarctica, the only continent, up to now, free of the virus. The army's press release said that at the Bernardo O'Higgins Riquelme base, following suspicions, swabbing testing was practiced in all personnel resulting in 36 positive cases, of which 26 belonging to the Army and ten to members of a contractor, doing maintenance work at the base.

[Advancing Falklands' sovereignty claims, one of Argentina's objectives as chair of Mercosur](#)

December 21, 2020, Merco Press

Argentina is holding the pro tempore rotating chair of Mercosur during the next six months and three are its main objectives during that period according to foreign ministry sources in Buenos Aires. They include Bolivia, the Falklands/Malvinas claim and trade accords and negotiations with other countries.

[Russia reiterates rejection of US blockade against Cuba](#)

December 25, 2020, Prensa Latina

Russia reiterated its rejection of the United States economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, and confirmed its commitment to developing and deepening its strategic cooperation with the country in several fields.

[Venezuela repudiates Colombian president's discriminatory stance](#)

December 24, 2020, Prensa Latina

Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodriguez on Thursday repudiated a discriminatory statement by Colombian President Ivan Duque on the refusal to vaccinate Venezuelan migrants under an irregular situation against Covid-19.

Africa

[How Member States and Partners Impede the African Union's Quest for Financial Autonomy](#)

December 24, 2020, All Africa.com

Wavering commitment in African capitals and the continued attractiveness of the African Union to external funders risk stalling the crucial path to financial autonomy.

[Congo sets March 21 for its presidential election](#)

December 25, 2020, Africa News

Elections in Africa, a dominant theme throughout the year 2020. It continues in 2021 with the Republic of Congo which has set its presidential election for March 21.

[Rebel groups declare ceasefire ahead of Central African Republic's tense election](#)

December 24, 2020, Africa News

Hundreds of people marched in the capital of the Central African Republic on Friday to demand peace three days before the presidential election takes place.

[Seven troops, four jihadists killed in Niger ahead of Sunday vote](#)

December 24, 2020, Africa News

Seven soldiers and four suspected jihadists were killed Monday in fighting in Niger's Tillabéri region, in a grip of recurrent jihadist attacks, less than a week before the presidential election, according to a press release from the national army.

[Year in Review: Africa's 2020 elections](#)

December 24, 2020, Africa News

Election fever kicked off in Africa in 2020, with old rivals facing off in Ghana, and leaders running for controversial third terms in West Africa.

[War in Tigray ongoing – TPLF belies Ethiopia govt](#)

December 23, 2020, Africa News

Forces of the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front, TPLF, are engaging in armed hostilities against the federal government and Eritrean troops in parts of the restive Tigray region.

[Somalia cuts ties with Guinea, now Kenya; Somaliland looks on](#)

December 23, 2020, Africa News

Somalia officially cut diplomatic relations with neighbouring Kenya recently citing accusing Nairobi of mobilizing troops and arming militia along a shared border. The two governments have been on an on and off collision course over the last few years.

[Sudan and Ethiopia start border talks one week after deadly clash](#)

December 22, 2020, Africa News

Sudan and Ethiopia began talks to demarcate a shared border, Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok's office said a week after Ethiopian forces reportedly

ambushed Sudanese troops along the border, leaving four dead and more than 20 wounded.

[Ethiopia military 'kills 40' after Benishangul-Gumuz massacre](#)

December 24, 2020, BBC News

Ethiopia's military has killed more than 40 men suspected to be linked to the massacre of at least 100 people, including children, in the Benishangul-Gumuz region, state media report.



DPG

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