

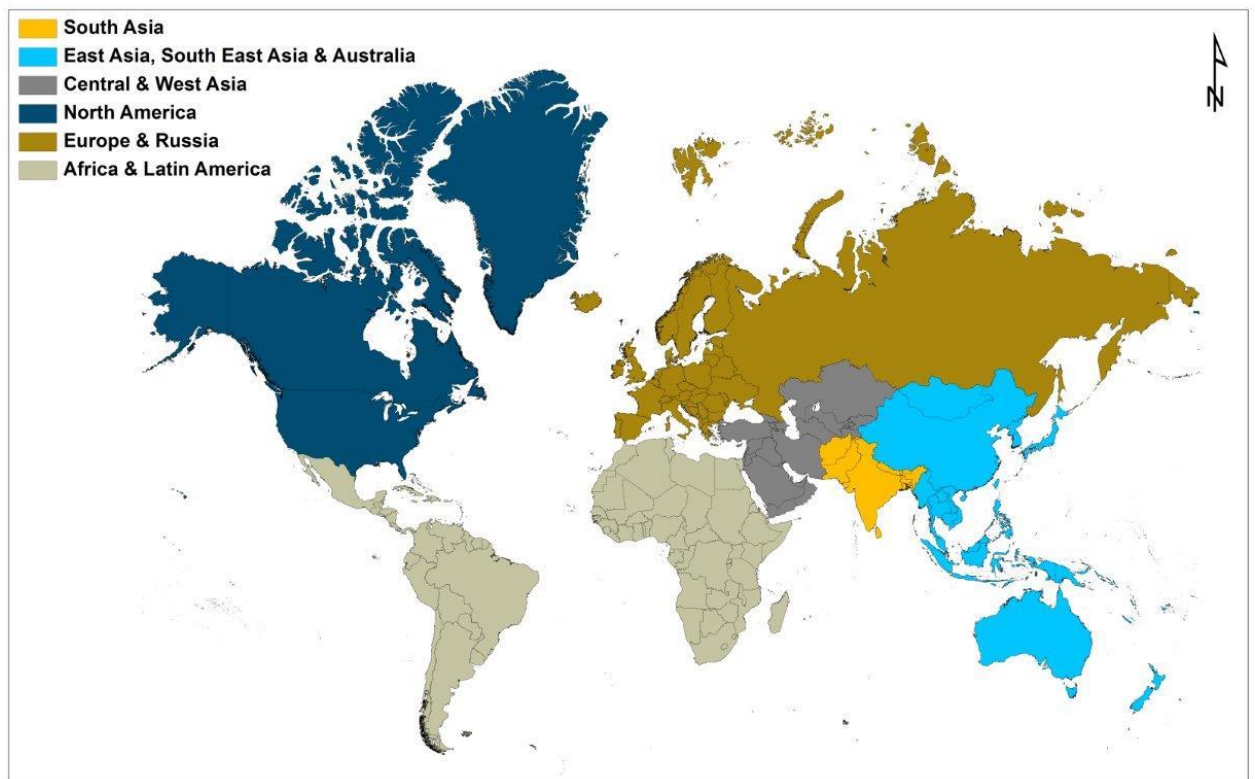


# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



Volume V, Issue 11 | March 13, 2021

Delhi Policy Group

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Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

## DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH Volume V, Issue 11

### 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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Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Angana Guha Roy at [angana@dpg.org.in](mailto:angana@dpg.org.in).

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## South Asia

### India

#### [Indian Navy Ships to visit Bangladesh on 50th anniversary of 1971 Liberation War](#)

March 8, 2021, The Hindustan Times

As part of the 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' celebration commemorating 50 years of the 1971 war triumph against Pakistan, Indian Naval Ships made their first-ever visit to the historic port town of Mongla in Bangladesh from March 8 to 10.

#### [INS Jalashwa arrives at port of Antsiranana, Madagascar with Naval training team](#)

March 13, 2021, ANI

Indian Naval Ship Jalashwa reached the port of Antsiranana, Madagascar with an Indian Naval training team on-board.

#### [Indian Navy Ships' 3-Day Visit To Mongla Port In Bangladesh Ends](#)

March 12, 2021, NDTV

Two Indian Navy ships undertook passage exercise with two Bangladesh Navy vessels on Thursday, culminating their three-day visit to the Mongla port in the neighbouring country, according to an official statement.

#### [Eye on China, India's plan for 6 nuclear-powered attack submarines back on track](#)

March 10, 2021, The Hindustan Times

On March 8, the Defence Research Development Organization (DRDO) successfully carried out the final test of the land-based prototype of the Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system in Mumbai. The AIP system, retrofitted by expanding the hull area, ensures that diesel attack submarines can remain under surface for a longer period and become more silent than a nuclear-powered submarine. The AIP system will be retrofitted into Kalvari class submarines, the third of which (INS Karanj) will be commissioned on Wednesday March 10.

#### [Indian Navy commissions third Scorpene-class submarine in Mumbai](#)

March 11, 2021, Naval Technology

The Indian Navy has commissioned its third Scorpene-class submarine INS Karanj at the Naval Dockyard Mumbai through a formal ceremony.

### [Quad goals: US, Indo-Pacific allies to up India's vaccine output](#)

March 12, 2021, Al Jazeera

United States President Joe Biden and fellow leaders of the Indo-Pacific group known as the Quad have announced a plan to expand coronavirus vaccine manufacturing capacity in India.

### [US Defence Secy to visit India next week, meet Rajnath](#)

March 11, 2021, The Indian Express

US Defense Secretary Lloyd J Austin will visit India next week – on March 19-20 – as part of his first international tour, the Ministry of Defence said on Wednesday. During his visit, Austin is expected to meet Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and other senior dignitaries of the government, the ministry said in a statement.

### [Quad vaccine initiative 'is the most pressing and valuable': Foreign Secy Harsh Vardhan Shringla](#)

March 12, 2021, Zee News

India's Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla on Friday (March 12) said that the vaccine initiative "is the most pressing and valuable" among the concrete takeaways of the first summit meeting of Quad leaders. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, United States President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison took part in the meeting, which was hosted by the US.

## **Pakistan**

### [Spy cameras at polling booth cause outrage ahead of Senate chairman election](#)

March 12, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan senate election already marred with controversies became murkier after "hidden" cameras were found in the polling booth ahead of voting for the chairman and deputy chairman slots.

### [Air chief calls on Sri Lankan counterpart](#)

March 6, 2021, The News

Pakistan Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan, who is on a visit to Sri Lanka, called on Air Marshal Sudarshana Karagoda Pathirana, Commander of Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF). They discussed matters of mutual professional interest. The air chief also attended SLAF's 70th anniversary parade as guest of honour at SLAF Base, Katunayke.

### [Five workers dead in Sibi bomb explosion](#)

March 6, 2021, Dawn

Five labourers were killed and five other people, including two security personnel, injured in a bomb blast near Sibi town. The blast occurred in the Tandori area, some 30km from Sibi town.

### [Pakistan to chair WTO body on trade, uplift](#)

March 6, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan has been elected to the chair of Committee on Trade & Development (CTD) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for 2021. In a press release the WTO General Council noted the consensus on a slate of names of chairpersons for WTO bodies, including Pakistan's ambassador to the WTO in Geneva, Switzerland, Dr Muhammad Mujtaba Piracha for heading the CTD.

### [Security forces kill eight terrorists in NW](#)

March 7, 2021, The News

Security Forces killed eight terrorists in two separate intelligence based operations (IBOs) in North Waziristan. Three Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) commanders were among those killed.

### [Two martyred in attack on Pakistan Navy vehicle in Gwadar](#)

March 7, 2021, Dawn

Two Pakistan Navy men were martyred and another was injured in an attack on their vehicle in the Ganz area in the coastal district of Gwadar. Pakistan Navy's vehicle was on its way to Ganz from Jiwani when unidentified attackers opened fire on it with automatic weapons.

### [London bank freezes Pakistan's Rs217m for Broadsheet](#)

March 8, 2021, The News

The United National Bank (UBL) London branch has frozen around £1 million (Rs217 million) held in Pakistan's account in compliance with an order, issued three weeks ago by the London High Court in favour of the Broadsheet LLC.

### [Khalilzad, Gen Scott Miller call on Gen Bajwa](#)

March 9, 2021, The News

US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad and Commander Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan General Austin Scott Miller called on Pakistan Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa at the GHQ on March 15.

### [Cabinet approves SBP Amend 2021 related three bills: Hafeez](#)

March 10, 2021, The News

Pakistan Finance Minister Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh said the federal cabinet had approved three important bills related to the SBP Amendment Bill 2021. These bills were aimed at granting autonomy to the central bank, abolishing corporate income tax bill for fetching tax revenues up to Rs140 billion and fixing cash bleeding state-owned enterprises (SOEs) bill under the IMF programme.

### [US blocks delivery of Turkish gunships to Pakistan](#)

March 10, 2021, Dawn

The United States has prevented Turkey from supplying 30 locally-made attack helicopters to Pakistan. According to Bloomberg News, Turkey's presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin told reporters that "the US has blocked Turkey's helicopter sale to Pakistan, which will likely lead to Islamabad buying it from China."

### [Pakistan to facilitate Uzbek access to Gwadar, Karachi ports](#)

March 11, 2021, The News

Prime Minister Imran Khan said Pakistan would facilitate Uzbekistan to get access to its seaports of Gwadar and Karachi in a bid to enhance regional connectivity and trade. In a meeting with Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister Abdlaziz Kamilov here at the PM House, the prime minister said Pakistan offered a shortest route to international seas to all Central Asian Republics including Uzbekistan and could prove as a gateway to landlocked Central Asia.

### [Pakistan has only Chinese vaccine to deal with Covid-19's third phase](#)

March 12, 2021, The News

As the pandemic threatens Pakistan with the third phase, the government has so far received COVID-19 vaccine only from China. It has not procured yet anything from the open market and is now awaiting more vaccines from the COVAX Facility, but it has not made any bilateral agreement with India in this regard.

## **Afghanistan**

### [18% Decline in Female Media Workers: Watchdog](#)

Mach 8, 2021, Tolo News

There has been an 18% reduction in the number of women in Afghan media over the last six months due to security threats, the Journalists' Safety

Committee says, adding that the figures are concerning and signals a worsening situation for journalists in Afghanistan.

[Jaishankar speaks to US special envoy on Afghanistan, takes stock of Taliban peace talks](#)

March 7, 2021, The Print

Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar spoke to U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad, even as the US' plan to withdraw troops from the war-torn country remains unclear after the Joe Biden administration took charge in January.

[Khalilzad, Mullah Baradar meet in Doha](#)

March 7, 2021, The News

Washington's special envoy to Afghanistan met with the Taliban in Qatar, as efforts intensify to revive a peace process faced with mounting violence and a US troop withdrawal deadline.

[Local Tajiks On Afghan Border Trained To Defend Against 'Taliban Attack'](#)

March 9, 2021, RFERL

Villagers in southern Tajikistan along the border with war-torn Afghanistan have been told they should be prepared "to take up arms" if militants try to enter the region. Local authorities in the Tajik district of Shamsiddin Shohin have held meetings with residents -- including army reservists and hunters -- to discuss the situation.

[Moscow to host Afghanistan talks on March 18: TASS cites foreign ministry](#)

March 10, 2021, Reuters

Russia plans to hold a conference on Afghanistan in Moscow later this month, but the U.S. State Department did not confirm American attendance. Reports comes after the United States shared with Afghan officials, Taliban leaders and others a draft peace plan calling for replacing the government with a power-sharing interim administration pending elections under a new constitution.

## **Bangladesh**

[India, Bangladesh build stronger connectivity as Delhi looks to embrace Dhaka in Indo-Pacific](#)

March 12, 2021, The Print

Apart from boosting bilateral ties, New Delhi is increasingly looking to embrace Dhaka under the Indo-Pacific initiative to assert greater power in the Bay of Bengal region.



## [Bangladesh Islamist groups demand severing ties with China over Uyghur persecution](#)

March 12, 2021, The Economic Times

Leaders of several Islamist groups in Bangladesh have demanded to end the China's Uyghur Muslim persecution. The leaders also called for a boycott of Chinese goods unless stopped of the persecution of Uighur Muslims.

## **Nepal**

### [Nepal can play the role of mediator between China and other countries](#)

March 11, 2021, CGTN

At a time when tensions between Beijing, New Delhi and Washington still need to be further alleviated, Nepal can fill the gap and play a role. On a recent visit to Kathmandu, Chinese State Councilor and Defense Minister Wei Fenghe reaffirmed China's commitment to safeguarding Nepal's national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

### [Drainage system, built using Indian aid, inaugurated in Nepal](#)

March 13, 2021, Outlook

A culvert and drainage system, which was built using grant assistance from India, was inaugurated in Nepal's Sarlahi district.

## **Bhutan**

### [PFC and REC to loan ₹4058 crore to strategic Bhutan JV hydropower project](#)

March 11, 2021, Livemint

State run Power Finance Corporation Ltd. (PFC) and REC Ltd. will loan Rs4,058 crore for the strategic 600-megawatt (MW) hydropower project being constructed at Trashigang in Bhutan.

## **Sri Lanka**

### [Sri Lanka's government bonds jump on China currency swap deal](#)

March 10, 2021, Yahoo Finance

Sri Lanka's government bonds surged on Wednesday after China approved a \$1.5 billion (10 billion yuan) currency swap with the debt-strained country. Sri Lanka's dollar-denominated bond due in July 2021 climbed 3.5 cents to 96.3 cents and its highest level since March 2020, while the January 2022 issue jumped 4.8 cents, Tradeweb data showed.

## East & South East Asia

### China

#### [Hong Kong: China approves 'patriotic' plan to control elections](#)

March 12, 2021, BBC

China's legislature has approved a resolution to overhaul Hong Kong's electoral system - its latest move to tighten control over the city. The "patriots governing Hong Kong" resolution was passed at the National People's Congress (NPC) on Thursday. It will reduce democratic representation and allow a pro-Beijing panel to vet and elect candidates. The former British colony was handed back to China in 1997 under a model called "one country, two systems".

#### [Academic faces Chinese lawsuit for exposing human rights abuses in Xinjiang](#)

March 10, 2021, The Hindustan Times

Beijing has targeted a high-profile U.S.-based researcher whose work has been critical to exposing human rights abuses in China's northwest, with state media reporting he is being sued by companies in the Xinjiang region. In a telephone interview from his home in Minnesota on Tuesday night, Adrian Zenz said he believed the lawsuit was a sign that U.S. economic sanctions on the region were having a significant effect. He said Beijing was probably seeking to create a chilling effect on other researchers doing similar work.

#### [China has breached all provisions of UN Genocide Convention in Xinjiang: Report](#)

March 09, 2021, The Hindustan Times

The Chinese government's actions against Uyghurs in Xinjiang have breached every provision of the UN Genocide Convention, according to a new report by more than 50 experts in international law, genocide and war crimes. Azeem Ibrahim, co-author of the report released on Tuesday by Washington-based think tank Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy, said there is overwhelming evidence to support the allegation of genocide.

#### [The Woke Chinese Communist Party](#)

March 7, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

Chinese state media rarely deserves attention but lately it's taken a notable and instructive turn. It is invoking the woke themes of American progressives as a propaganda weapon against the U.S. The Communist Party-run paper notes that the members of Five Eyes, an intelligence-sharing network, "have a strong sense of civilization superiority." Note the use of "white supremacy" and "diversity" and "civilization superiority," which come straight from the

progressive critique of America as a country that is “systemically” racist and oppressive.

### [Xi Jinping’s Eager-to-Please Bureaucrats Snarl His China Plans](#)

March 7, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

After Chinese leader Xi Jinping ordered rural poverty eliminated by 2020, bureaucrats in the southwestern city of Mianyang got busy—with paperwork. Instructed to devote 70% of their time to the campaign, they diligently filled out forms certifying compliance, a practice known as “leaving marks,” said Pang Jia, a local judicial clerk who joined the effort. When higher-ups demanded photographic proof of their home visits, some aid workers made up for missing winter photos by posing in cold-weather clothing during summer house calls, Ms. Pang said.

### [China, US could engage in multi-faceted, multi-tiered dialogue, says Chinese Premier ahead of Alaska talks](#)

March 11, 2021, Global Times

China and the US released great news that attracted world attention on Wednesday and Thursday, as the world's two biggest economies decided to take the first step to reset their problematic ties. They announced a “2+2” meeting between the two countries' chief diplomats next week, which was a highly anticipated topic for journalists worldwide to ask Chinese Premier Li Keqiang at a press conference.

### [India, China to continue military talks on LAC disengagement](#)

March 12, 2021, The Hindu

India and China will hold another round of talks between military commanders “as soon as possible” to continue the disengagement process in friction areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

### [India, China to ensure stability on LAC, call another meeting of commanders soon](#)

March 12, 2021, The Hindustan Times

India and China agreed on Friday to ensure stability in the Ladakh sector of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and convene another meeting of senior military commanders soon to take forward disengagement and de-escalation at friction points on the disputed border.

### [South Asia deftly navigates China–India tensions](#)

March 9, 2021, East Asia Forum

China–India relations took a turn for the worse in 2020. Intrusions by the People’s Liberation Army along the contested border led to a military standoff and skirmishes, the likes of which had not been seen for decades between the two countries. Only recently have they begun the process of disengagement.

### [Message to China: Quad vows to keep region ‘free & secure’](#)

March 13, 2021, The Times of India

Sending a strong message to China, the Quad in its first summit signalled its arrival on the geopolitical scene with PM Modi describing the grouping as a “force for global good” and an “important pillar of stability” in the Indo- Pacific.

### [Leaders Of Quad Discuss "Challenge" Posed By China: US National Security Advisor](#)

March 13, 2021, NDTV

Leaders of the US, India, Australia, and Japan did discuss the "challenge" posed by China during the first meeting of the Quad, and they made clear that none of them have any "illusions" about Beijing, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan has said.

### [China's Xiaomi Removed From Trump-Era Blacklist By US Judge](#)

March 13, 2021, NDTV

A US judge on Friday ordered Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi temporarily removed from a government blacklist barring American investment in the company.

### [China lashes out at US over tighter Huawei restrictions](#)

March 12, 2021, Al JAzeera

China blasted President Joe Biden’s administration for imposing new restrictions on national tech champion Huawei Technologies Co., saying the U.S. “isn’t a reliable country that is to be trusted.”

## **Japan**

### [India, Japan space agencies review cooperation](#)

March 11, 2021, The Hindu

Indian and Japanese space agencies reviewed cooperation in earth observation, lunar cooperation and satellite navigation, and also agreed to

explore opportunities for cooperation in space situational awareness and professional exchange.

#### [India to make US vaccines with Japan funds, Australia logistics](#)

March 13, 2021, The Indian Express

At the first summit of the leaders of the Quadrilateral grouping, a Quad vaccine initiative was announced Friday in which India will manufacture American vaccines with Japanese funding and Australian logistical support for countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

#### ['Quad' leaders pledge to counter China with billion-dose vaccine pact](#)

March 13, 2021, The Japan Times

The leaders of Japan, the United States, Australia and India agreed Friday to work to expand COVID-19 vaccine production for developing countries amid China's growing influence, while pursuing collaboration toward a rules-based maritime order in disputed waters.

#### [Suga gives Koizumi new role as minister in charge of climate change](#)

March 10, 2021, Japan Today

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga on Tuesday gave Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi a new role as minister in charge of climate change as the country seeks to take the lead in upcoming international conferences on the global issue.

#### [Japan says timing of Biden-Suga meeting undecided](#)

March 8, 2021, Japan Today

No timing has been set for when a meeting between U.S. President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga might happen, Japan's top government spokesman said.

## **Korea**

#### [How Do You Solve a Problem Like Korea?](#)

March 8, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

The Journal reports that Kim Jong Un's authorized biography is out and a Korean-language edition has been uploaded to the web. The authors are, unsurprisingly, bullish on Mr. Kim. Summing it up, the authors gush that "there has never been a time when all the world has been this focused on our people's greatness and dignity in our 5,000-year history." They are not wrong. North Korea, with a gross domestic product estimated at less than \$26 billion and a population of 26 million, punches well above its weight.

### [COVID-19 gives excuse to Seoul for scaled-down combined drill](#)

March 11, 2021, The Korea Times

While COVID-19 has brought suffering to the whole world, North Korea seems to have become a beneficiary of the pandemic as the combined military drill between South Korea and the United States has been downsized due to the deadly disease. On Monday, Seoul and Washington kicked off their joint military training, but the nine-day exercise is proceeding as a computer-simulated command post exercise (CPX) only with no outdoor drills after the allies decided to scale it back, citing the coronavirus. Last year they canceled both spring and summer drills.

### [World powers ignoring North Korea crimes against humanity: UN expert](#)

March 11, 2021, The Korea Times

World powers bear responsibility for ignoring crimes against humanity that may still be perpetrated by authorities in North Korea amid a focus on its nuclear programme, a U.N. human rights investigator said.

### [N. Korean threat persists amid continued pursuit of weapons: USFK commander](#)

March 11, 2021, The Korea Herald

North Korea continues to pose a serious threat to the United States and its ally South Korea as Pyongyang pursues a nuclear arsenal and other weapons of mass destruction; the commander of US Forces Korea (USFK) has said.

### [No plan to deploy new anti-missile assets in S. Korea: USFK](#)

March 12, 2021, The Korea Herald

The US Forces Korea (USFK) said Friday its commander's recent remark on a plan to build new missile defense capabilities on the Korean Peninsula does not involve the introduction of new equipment or units.

### [Blinken's trip to Asia will provide 'key ingredient' for US policy toward N. Korea: Price](#)

March 13, 2021, The Korea Herald

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's trip to Japan and South Korea will give him a chance to coordinate US policy and its approach toward North Korea, a State Department official said.

## Southeast Asia

[China willing to enhance media cooperation with ASEAN countries: official](#)

March 13, 2021, Ecns.com

China is willing to work with ASEAN countries, Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) to deepen media cooperation and facilitate policy alignment, an official said.

[India's 'Act East' must factor this in: Post-pandemic, Southeast Asia increasingly distrusts China and trusts the US](#)

March 12, 2021, The Times of India

A recent survey of Southeast Asian perception of China by Singapore-based Institute of Southeast Asian Studies reveals interesting facts that may have implications for our Act East policy and help our policy makers calibrate their approach towards the region. State of Southeast Asia 2021 survey, tracking the trust and distrust ratings of major powers in the region, asserts "two juxtaposing trend lines with regard to Southeast Asian perceptions towards China, as simultaneously the most influential and most distrusted power in the region".

[Singapore PM: 'Considerable risk' of severe US-China tensions](#)

March 12, 2021, BBC

Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has told the BBC that a clash between the US and China is more likely than it was five years ago.

## Central & West Asia

### Central Asia

#### [Kyrgyzstan: Authorities worry over fuel, food cost rises](#)

March 05, 2021, Eurasianet

Rises in the prices for fuel and food are posing a big headache for Kyrgyz authorities ahead of a season that often sees politics warm up. On March 02, the new government banned fuel exports beyond the borders of the Eurasian Economic Union, citing the need to stabilize prices on the domestic market, which have risen notably since the beginning of the year and are set to shoot up again in coming weeks.

#### [Turkmenistan Ramps Up Controls Over Outside Information](#)

March 07, 2021, RFE/RL

Police in authoritarian Turkmenistan are reportedly further tightening controls over information as the secretive country downplays the coronavirus pandemic and clamps down on brewing discontent over years of economic turmoil.

#### [Indo-Uzbek Joint Exercise Dustlik-II: Uzbekistan Army contingent arrives in Delhi](#)

March 08, 2021, The Economic Times

Uzbekistan Army contingent arrived in Delhi on March 08 for Indo-Uzbek Joint Exercise Dustlik-II. Rezang La Battalion Kharga Warriors representing Indian Army in exercise. The joint exercise is based on counter terrorist operations and enhancing military cooperation. The second edition of joint military exercise Dustlik-II will be held from March 10 to 19.

#### [CSTO To Conduct Three Military Exercises in Kazakhstan In 2022 – Defense Ministry](#)

March 09, 2021, Eurasian Times

The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) will conduct three military exercises in Kazakhstan next year, the Kazakh Ministry of Defense said. CSTO Secretary-General Stanislav Zas arrived in Kazakhstan on March 09 and met with Kazakh Defense Minister Nurlan Yermekbayev to discuss the cooperation within the organization.



### [Nur-Sultan Wants China 'To Help Resolve Issues' Raised By Ethnic Kazakhs From Xinjiang](#)

March 12, 2021, RFE/RL

Kazakhstan's Foreign Ministry says it has asked Chinese authorities to "help resolve issues" raised by ethnic Kazakhs in China, who have been demanding their relatives' release from custody in the northwestern Chinese region of Xinjiang.

### [Kyrgyzstan to hold constitutional referendum in April](#)

March 12, 2021, Anadolu Agency

Kyrgyzstan's President Sadyr Japarov has approved a law to hold a constitutional referendum on April 11. According to the statement made by the Presidential Press Center, the referendum will take place simultaneously with local elections. The constitutional amendment proposes the country's transition from the parliamentary to a presidential system.

### [Uzbek, Kyrgyz Leaders 'Agree' To Solve Border Issues In Three Months](#)

March 12, 2021, RFE/RL

Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoev says he has agreed with visiting Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov on how to proceed to solve border issues between the two Central Asian nations within three months. "For the first time in relations between our two nations we have agreed who should do what and when at the border because this is a serious problem that our people are waiting to be fixed," Mirziyoev said on March 12 after holding talks with his Kyrgyz counterpart in Tashkent.

### [Indo-Uzbekistan Field Training Exercise 'DUSTLIK ' commences in Ranikhet\(Uttarakhand\)](#)

Mach 10, 2021, PIB

The India – Uzbekistan joint military exercise "DUSTLIK II" commenced on March 10 in Foreign Training Node Chaubatia, Ranikhet (Uttarakhand). This is the Second Edition of annual bilateral joint exercise of both armies. It will continue till 19th March 2021. The first edition of the exercise was held at Uzbekistan in Nov 2019.

### [Tajikistan, Belize Receive Made In India COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

Mach 9, 2021, NDTV

As part of its Vaccine Maitri initiative aimed at assisting countries in their fight against the coronavirus pandemic, the Made-in-India vaccines have reached Tajikistan and Belize.

## West Asia

### [Brent Crude Breaks \\$70 After Saudi Arabia's Oil Facilities Attacked by Yemen's Houthis](#)

March 07, 2021, CNBC

The surge in oil prices came after Saudi Arabia said its oil facilities were targeted by missiles and drones on Sunday (March 07). A Houthi military spokesman claimed responsibility for the attacks.

### [US and Europe Condemn Houthi Attacks on Saudi Arabia and Yemen's Marib](#)

March 11, 2021, Arab News

The Western governments condemned attacks by the Iran-backed Houthi militia against Saudi Arabia (Aramco facilities) and their offensive in Yemen's Marib province.

### [OPEC Ignores India's Call; Saudi Arabia asks New Delhi to Use Cheap oil it Bought Last Year](#)

March 05, 2021, The New Indian Express

International oil prices rose after OPEC and its allies ignored India's plea to ease production control, with Saudi Arabia asking New Delhi to instead use oil it bought at rock bottom rates last year.

### [India Said to Blame Iran's Quds Force for Blast outside Israeli Embassy in New Delhi](#)

March 08, 2021, The Times of Israel

Indian counter-terror investigators reportedly believe the IRGC tasked a local cell with planting the remote-control detonated device in January in New Delhi.

### [Iran Rejects Blame for Israeli Embassy Attack in India](#)

March 08, 2021, Daily Sabah

Iran has dismissed reports of its involvement in a recent low-intensity explosion near the Israeli mission in the Indian capital. In a detailed statement on Monday (March 08), the Iranian Embassy in New Delhi rejected what it said were "unsubstantiated allegations," offering to cooperate with Indian authorities in the probe.

### [US Replaces Iran in India's Crude Basket in 2020-21](#)

March 09, 2021, Moneycontrol

In a major shift in India's crude basket and bilateral trade, the country's crude oil imports from Iran dropped to zero during the current financial year from a historic high of 27.2 million tonne (MT) in 2016-17.

### [Iran Slips Record Volume of Oil into China, Reaches Out to Asian Clients for Trade Resumption](#)

March 08, 2021, The Times of India

Iran has quietly moved record amounts of crude oil to top client China in recent months, while India's state refiners have added Iranian oil to their annual import plans on the assumption that US sanctions on the OPEC supplier will soon ease.

### [India Calls for Investigation into Chemical Weapons Use in Syria, Warns UNSC about WMDs](#)

March 05, 2021, Republic World

India on Thursday (March 04) called for an objective investigation into the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria and urged the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to remain aware of the dangers of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) falling into the hands of terrorist groups.

### [Indian Intelligence Agencies Keep an Eye on Al-Qaeda Linked Turkish Group Expanding in Nepal](#)

February 28, 2021, Mint

An Al-Qaeda linked-charity group from Turkey has been working with Islamai Sangh Nepal (ISN), which is under the scanner of Indian intelligence agencies for allegedly providing sanctuary to terrorists, to expand its logistical hub for jihadist networks.

### [Rockets Hit Iraqi Base Where U.S. Troops are Stationed](#)

March 04, 2021, The New York Times

A barrage of rockets was fired on Wednesday (March 03) at the Ayn Al Asad air base in Iraq's western Anbar Province – one of the last remaining Iraqi bases where U.S. forces are stationed. An Iraqi security statement and one released by the Pentagon said 10 rockets were launched toward the sprawling base.

### [Rockets of Iraqi Militias Test Patience of New US Administration](#)

March 05, 2021, The Arab Weekly

Observers in the region say the latest aggression by Iran-aligned militias in Iraq aims at testing the reaction of the new US administration, and whether

Washington will respond or accept these attacks as a fait accompli, limiting its reaction to warnings and threats as the previous administration of former president Donald Trump did.

### [Pope Francis Meets Iraq's Shia Leader al-Sistani](#)

March 06, 2021, AL Jazeera

Pope Francis has met with Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, one of the most senior leaders in Shia Islam, in Iraq's holy city of Najaf to deliver a message of peaceful coexistence, urging Muslims to embrace Iraq's long-beleaguered Christian minority.

### [Russian FM Lavrov in Saudi Arabia to Take Advantage of Biden's Mistakes](#)

March 10, 2021, The Arab Weekly

An informed Saudi source said that the Gulf tour by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, which began Monday (March 8), coincides with a Saudi effort to recalibrate its relationship with the United States.

## United States

### United States

#### [How Biden Can Make the Quad Endure](#)

March 11, 2021, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

On March 12, 2021, U.S. President Joe Biden and three counterparts will virtually convene the first ever summit-level meeting of the Quadrilateral framework (or Quad)—a forum composed of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States. This once-informal group has become more formalized in recent years, but it has been hampered by its lack of a clear functional agenda. And the group is unlikely to cohere, much less endure, without one.

#### [Senate passes \\$1.9 trillion Covid relief bill, House Democrats plan final approval Tuesday](#)

March 6, 2021, CNBC

The Senate passed a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package on Saturday as Democrats rush to send out a fresh round of aid. The Democratic-held House aims to pass the bill on Tuesday and send it to President Joe Biden for his signature before a March 14 deadline to renew unemployment aid programs.

#### [Presidential Speech Highlights: Biden Calls For U.S. to 'Mark Our Independence From This Virus' by 4th of July](#)

March 12, 2021, The New York Times

The president delivered his first prime-time White House address, hours after signing into law a \$1.9 trillion stimulus package.

#### [Biden directs states to open vaccinations to all adults by May 1](#)

March 12, 2021, CNN

Addressing a pandemic-worn nation a year after coronavirus brought life to a halt, President Joe Biden on Thursday offered a plan to lift the country from crisis using a pair of upcoming dates: May 1, by which he will order states to allow all adults to receive vaccines; and July 4, when he said Americans can again celebrate Independence Day in person.

#### [Biden's Russia pipeline dilemma just got worse](#)

March 5, 2021, Politico

Lawmakers are ramping up pressure on the White House to try to halt the construction of a major Russia-to-Germany gas pipeline, as administration officials debate how to stymie the project quickly without alienating a key European ally.

[Biden not yet holding a formal news conference raises accountability questions](#)

March 11, 2021, ABC News

Halfway into his first 100 days, President Joe Biden has yet to hold a formal, solo news conference, raising questions about accountability with the White House under increasing pressure to explain why.

[Leaders of US, Japan, India and Australia to meet in first-ever 'Quad' summit](#)

March 10, 2021, CNN

The leaders of the United States, Japan, India and Australia will meet in a virtual summit Friday, the US and Indian governments announced Tuesday. It will be the first-time talks have been held between the heads of state of the four-member group, informally known as the "Quad," and comes as all four countries see heightened tensions with China over a variety of issues.

[Quad Summit not about China but genocide of Uighurs will be discussed: White House](#)

March 12, 2021, The Hindu

The Biden administration once again signaled that the Quad ( the Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue between India, the U.S., Japan and Australia) is not a group about China and the agenda for Friday's first ever Quad Summit meeting is not China-focused.

[Quad tightens rare-earth cooperation to counter China](#)

March 11, 2021, Nikkei Asia

The U.S., Australia, Japan, and India are on the verge of joining hands to build a rare-earth procurement chain to counter the dominance China plays in supplying these crucial elements to makers of everything from smartphones to high-performance motors to EV batteries.

[Blinken and Sullivan to meet their Chinese Counterparts next week](#)

March 11, 2021, The Hindu

Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan will meet their Chinese counterparts, Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs Yang Jiechi and State Councilor Wang Yi in Anchorage on March 19.

[US, Israel hold talks on Iran nuclear diplomacy, security threats](#)

March 11, 2021, Al Jazeera

Officials from the United States and Israel met by video conference Thursday to discuss the two countries' security challenges in the Middle East, as well as

the Biden administration's plan to re-engage diplomacy with Iran on nuclear weapons.

[No decision yet on US force posture in Afghanistan, says Blinken](#)

March 11, 2021, The Times of India

The Biden administration is currently reviewing its Afghanistan policy and has so far not made any decision on the American force posture in the war-torn country, Secretary of State Tony Blinken has said, ahead of the May 1 deadline for a final withdrawal of US troops – stipulated in the Taliban-US deal last year.

[U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to visit India during his first visit abroad](#)

March 10, 2021, The Hindu

American Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin will visit India from March 19 to 21 and meet Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and other leaders as part of his maiden visit abroad, the Pentagon announced on Wednesday.

[US will retaliate for Iraq missile strike when it chooses, defense secretary says](#)

March 7, 2021, The Guardian

The US will do what it sees as necessary to defend its interests after a rocket attack this week against the Ain al-Sada airbase in Iraq, which hosts American, coalition and Iraqi forces, the defense secretary, Lloyd Austin, said on Sunday.

## Europe & Russia

### Europe

#### [German industry urges EU to toughen response to unfair Chinese trade practices](#)

March 11, 2021, Hindustan Times

The European Union should take a tougher approach to protecting companies from unfair Chinese trade practices as Beijing is not keeping its promise to further open up its economy, Germany's BDI industry association said on Thursday.

#### [EU to Sanction Chinese Officials Over Human Rights Violations](#)

March 11, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

The European Union is set to target China with sanctions for the first time since the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown, blacklisting four people and one entity over human rights abuses in Xinjiang, several diplomats said.

#### [EU floats Ethiopia sanctions over humanitarian aid](#)

March 12, 2021, EU Observer

Ethiopian authorities and others obstructing humanitarian aid into the Tigray region could end up on an EU sanctions list, under a new idea floated by the European Commission.

#### [As vaccine nationalism deepens, governments pay to bring production home](#)

March 12, 2021, Reuters

From Australia to Thailand, states planning home-based vaccine plants are starting to reshape the industry. The German venture has the backing of the regional government, as part of a national effort to secure supplies and add vaccines to Germany's exports.

#### [Despite transatlantic 'love fest', EU charts third way in ties with US and China](#)

March 12, 2021, Reuters

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's first videoconference with European Union foreign ministers last month was so good humoured that some diplomats in Europe described it as a "love fest".



### [Norway wealth fund to probe whether firms could be using forced labour from China's Xinjiang](#)

March 10, 2021, Reuters

Norway's \$1.3 trillion wealth fund will probe whether companies it is invested in may be using the labour of ethnic Uighurs and other Muslims linked to China's internment camps in farwestern Xinjiang, the head of the fund's ethics watchdog said.

### [France conducts first military drills in space](#)

March 10, 2021, The Economic Times

France has begun its first military exercises in space to test its ability to defend its satellites, in a sign of the growing competition between world powers in Earth's orbit.

### [Quad, France and UAE join hands in 2 naval exercises to dominate Indo-Pacific](#)

March 9, 2021, Hindustan Times

The Indian Navy, its partners in the QUAD grouping, and, its strategic allies France and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will be part of complex interoperability exercises involving carrier strike groups, anti-submarine warfare aircraft and attack submarines in April– a move aimed at protecting their dominance from the Persian Gulf to the Malacca Straits.

### [Apple to build Europe's largest R&D facility in Germany](#)

March 11, 2021, The Hindu

Apple has planned to invest more than €1 billion to build its new R&D facility in Munich, Germany. Called Silicon Design Center, the new facility will focus on 5G, connectivity and future wireless technologies.

### [Kashmiris want social, economic, political changes, says EU envoy after visit](#)

March 10, 2021, The Print

European Union (EU) Ambassador to India Ugo Astuto – who has twice been to Kashmir as part of the foreign envoys' visit after the scrapping of Article 370 – said the people in the Valley are now looking towards the "organisation" of the legislative assembly and highlighted that it is crucial to have freedom of expression in democracies and open societies.

### [China blasts BBC report after summoning U.K. ambassador](#)

March 11, 2021, The Hindu

China is complaining anew about recent reporting by the BBC, days after summoning the British ambassador to Beijing to register displeasure over a recent article she penned defending press freedom.

## [Farmers' Protest: Indian Foreign Secretary Summons UK High Commissioner Over Parliament Debate](#)

March 9, 2021, The Wire

In a strong reaction to the UK parliamentary debate on the farmers' protest, India on Tuesday summoned the British high commissioner Alex Willis to lodge a protest against the "unwarranted and tendentious" discussion was a "gross interference" in India's internal affairs.

## **Russia**

### [Russia to Work With U.S. on Climate Change, Envoy Says](#)

March 09, 2021, The Moscow Times

Russia and the United States will work together to tackle climate change-related issues in a rare moment of cooperation between the two powers with increasingly frayed ties, President Vladimir Putin's representative on climate issues said. Ruslan Edelgeriyev identified protection of the rapidly warming Arctic, forest sector projects and nuclear energy as key priorities in Russian-U.S. climate collaboration.

### [Troops in central Russia to hold six international drills this year](#)

March 09, 2021, TASS

Russia's Central Military District will hold 23 joint international events in 2021, including six drills with foreign countries, Central Military District Commander Colonel-General Alexander Lapin said. "Overall, we will hold twenty-three joint measures this year, including six international drills. The Peace Mission-2021 anti-terror exercise will be the main event of the troops' joint training," the general said.

### [Russian strategic bombers fly over Japanese Sea during 9-hour long mission](#)

March 11, 2021, Russia Today

Two Russian strategic nuclear-capable Tu-95-MS bombers have performed a scheduled flight over the northwestern part of the Pacific Ocean, including the Japanese Sea. At some point, they were shadowed by Japan's fighters. Footage released by the Russian Defense Ministry shows the giant four-engine bombers taking off from a military airfield and flying over the ocean before safely returning home after more than nine hours in the sky. The bombers were escorted by several Sukhoi Su-35c supermaneuverable air defense fighters.

### [Russian government allows using military infrastructure for foreign satellite launches](#)

March 12, 2021, TASS

The Russian government has allowed using military space systems and facilities for launching a Soyuz-2 carrier rocket with foreign satellites from the Baikonur spaceport, according to the data posted on the government's legal information web portal.

### [Countries Slam Russia at UN Over Navalny Case](#)

March 12, 2021, The Moscow Times

Dozens of countries took Russia to task at the UN on March 12 over its imprisonment of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, and slammed numerous "arbitrary arrests" of his supporters. In a historic joint statement delivered to the United Nations Human Rights Council, 45 countries voiced alarm at "the deteriorating situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms" in Russia, "manifested in particular by the unlawful detention, arrest and imprisonment of Mr. Alexei Navalny."

### [Russia to retaliate, if US brings intermediate-range missiles to Asia-Pacific – diplomat](#)

March 12, 2021, TASS

Russia will react and take measures to maintain its national security, if the United States deploys intermediate and shorter-range missiles to the Asia-Pacific Region, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told a news briefing following Japanese media reports that Tokyo and Washington were mulling plans for discussing the outlook for bringing to Japan US ground-based intermediate range missiles, previously banned under the INF treaty.

## Africa & Latin America

### Latin America

#### [Pandemic has pushed over 20 million in poverty, says UN Report](#)

6 March 2021, MercoPress

More than 20 million people were pushed into poverty during pandemic-plagued 2020 across Latin America and the Caribbean, according to the U.N. economic agency for the region. Poverty as a whole rose to afflict a total of 208 million people – 33.7% from 30.5% of the population – in a year when the overall GDP collapsed by 7.7%

#### [World Bank approves over USD 420 million loan to Argentina for sanitation and housing](#)

6 March 2021, MercoPress

The World Bank Board of Directors approved a US\$ 300 million loan to expand and improve water and sanitation services in Metropolitan Buenos Aires, particularly in the most vulnerable areas. An additional US\$ 120 million will be available for the construction of social housing, benefiting nearly 10,000 inhabitants of Buenos Aires Province.

#### [Uruguay increases capital investments in science](#)

7 March 2021, Prensa Latina

The Mayor's Office of Montevideo will increase investment in science from today through a special innovation fund, after the government cut back resources of that vital sector.

#### [Cuba, Venezuela deepen economic ties](#)

9 March 2021, Prensa Latina

Cuba and Venezuela are deepening cooperation ties during the 21st Joint Intergovernmental Commission, attended by Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodriguez. At the meeting, the parties discuss an agenda aimed at continuing to develop economic, commercial and financial ties between the two countries, on the basis of solidarity and complementarity.

#### [Austrian coalition would block EU/Mercosur trade deal accord if it goes against the European Green Deal](#)

10 March 2021, MercoPress

Austria's coalition government has confirmed it will block the landmark EU-Mercosur trade agreement – which should create the biggest free-trade area in

the world – saying it goes against the EU's environmental ambitions set out in the European Green Deal.

### [Argentina promises Bolivia's incorporation to Mercosur for the next bloc's summit](#)

12 March 2021, MercoPress

Argentina pledged to manage Bolivia's entry into Mercosur, after both countries relaunched their trade relationship during the official visit of the Argentine Foreign Minister

## **Africa**

### [At least, 98 dead at the Bata blast in Equatorial Guinea](#)

7 March 2021, Africa Times

At least 98 people are dead and hundreds injured after a series of explosions rocked the port city of Bata in Equatorial Guinea. The cause of the explosions remains under investigation, though President Nguema publicly said the blasts were linked to storage practices of the explosives.

### [Increased pirate activity along the western coast of Africa](#)

9 March 2021, African Report

From Cape Verde to the Angolan coast, attacks on ships have increased in recent years. In this vast maritime region, pirates – initially concentrated around the Niger Delta – have extended their activities to all the Nigerian coasts as well as to Benin and Togo.

### [Senegal: Opposition Leader released under judicial supervision](#)

10 March 2021, African Report

Senegalese opposition leader Ousmane Sonko was arrested on 3 March while on his way to answer a summons at the courthouse in Dakar, as part of an investigation opened against him following an allegation of rape.

### [South Africa's beloved Zulu king dies at 72](#)

12 March 2021, CNN

South Africans are calling for a state funeral to be held in honor of Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini, the revered monarch of the country's largest ethnic group, whose death was announced Friday.

[COVID threatens Africa's conservation efforts, according to an IUCN Report](#)

12 March 2021, Africa Times

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a sobering impact on global nature conservation, with Africa and Asia the most severely affected, according to new research papers published in *PARKS*, the journal of the IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas.



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