

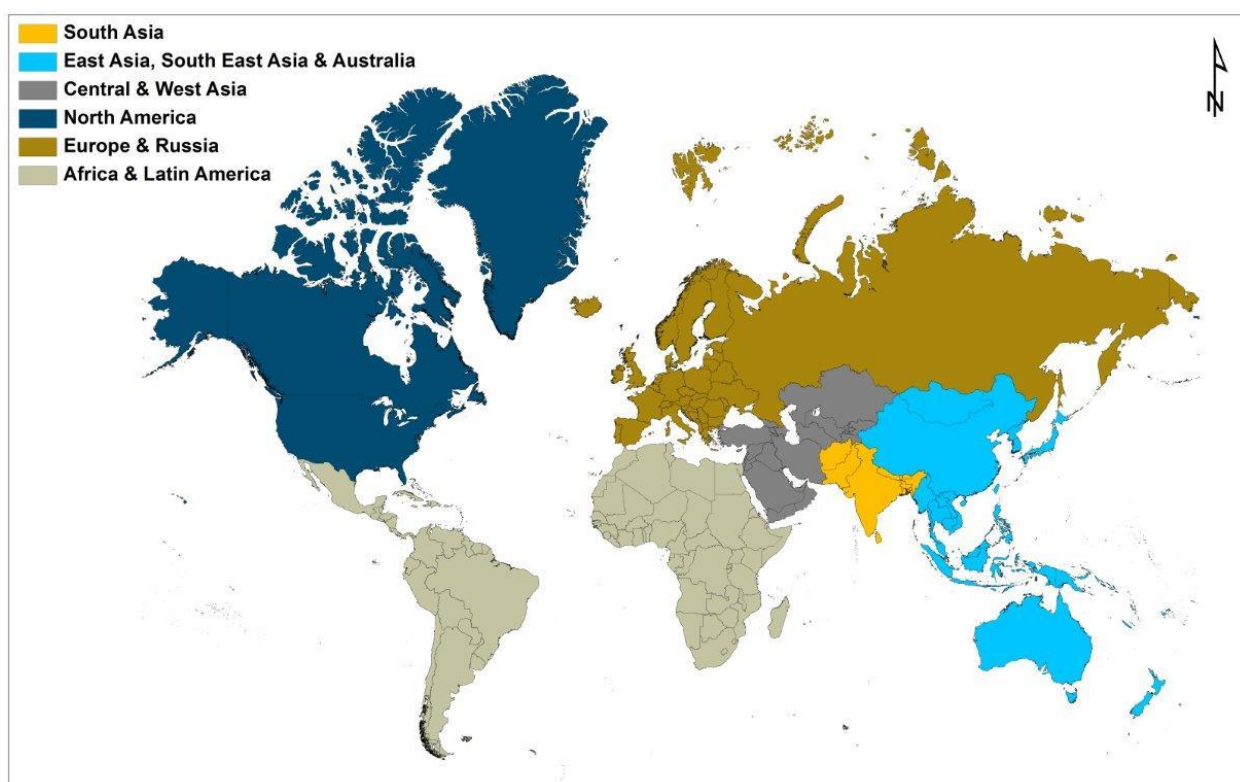


Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



Volume V, Issue 5 | January 29, 2021

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

[Jaishankar suggests way forward for China ties after year of 'exceptional stress'](#)

January 28, 2021, The Hindu

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said that a recognition of "mutual respect, mutual sensitivities and mutual interests" was key to repairing India-China relations, after what he called a year of "exceptional stress" in a relationship "profoundly disturbed" by the border crisis.

[India, China At Crossroads, Choices Will Have Global Repercussions: Foreign Minister S Jaishankar](#)

January 28, 2021, NDTV

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar outlined eight broad principles and three "mutuals" to mend strained ties between India and China, and said the two countries are truly at crossroads and their choices will have "profound repercussions, not just for them but for the entire world."

[Jaishankar yellow-cards China for violating pacts, spells out the India way](#)

January 29, 2021, Hindustan Times

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's address at a conference makes it amply clear that the only way forward for the two countries is for their armies to go back to their permanent bases along the 1597-km Line of Actual Control (LAC) in East Ladakh as they existed in April 2020.

["This Budget Will Be Seen As Part Of 4-5 Mini Budgets Of 2020": PM](#)

January 29, 2021, NDTV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said the upcoming Union Budget was the next in a series of mini-budgets presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in 2020. He also spelt out his priority of using the first Parliamentary session of the decade to chart out a bright future for India.

[India Beat All Odds In Coronavirus Fight, Says PM Modi](#)

January 28, 2021, NDTV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said there would be more Made-in-India vaccines soon as the country continued to save lives by exporting medicines and vaccines.

[Modi govt determined to strengthen India's military preparedness: President Kovind](#)

January 29, 2021, Livemint

India's border tensions with China figured in the speech by President Ram Nath Kovind Friday on the opening day of the Budget session of parliament with the president stating that the Modi government was vigilant and committed to safeguarding the interests of the country.

[PM Modi at Davos: Despite doomsday predictions, India defeated Covid and helped 150 other countries](#)

January 28, 2021, India Today

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that India not only managed to beat the Covid-19 crisis it has also helped over 150 countries in the process, despite predictions for the worst.

[Aero India 2021 billed as 'Runway to Billion Opportunities': Rajnath Singh](#)

January 29, 2021, Livemint

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said that the upcoming Aero India show is billed as the 'Runway to a Billion Opportunities'.

[India's defence needs money. If Budget can't provide it, we need to change how we fight](#)

January 29, 2021, The Print

Even as China flexes its muscles along Ladakh, and pokes and prods at other spots along the borders, there is apprehension whether India's declining defence budget can ever be adequately beefed up to deal with a clear and emerging threat. This comes alongside the Ministry of Statistics lowering projections of GDP shrinkage to 7.7 per cent, which is even worse than the 7.5 per cent estimated by the Reserve Bank of India.

[India to Host Indian Ocean Defense Ministers Meeting](#)

January 28, 2021, The Diplomat

Beijing's growing activities in the Indian Ocean region are of great concern in New Delhi.

[Boeing confident over growth prospects of US-India strategic ties under Biden](#)

January 29, 2021, Livemint

Exuding confidence that the US-India ties will continue to evolve and grow at a strategic level, a Boeing official has said that there are "good early signs" in the new Biden administration that the positive relationship will grow and strengthen over the next several years.

Pakistan

[Work begins on CASA-1000 power transmission line](#)

January 28, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan launched construction work on the Torkham-to-Nowshera portion of the \$1.17 billion Central Asia-South Asia Regional Trade and Transmission Project (CASA-1000) on January 27.

[Pakistan-China joint parliamentary panel soon to oversee CPEC](#)

January 28, 2021, Dawn

Beijing and Islamabad have agreed on formation of a joint parliamentary committee for effective oversight and monitoring of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

[Azerbaijan seeks to build long-term energy ties](#)

January 28, 2021, Dawn

Socar Trading, a commercial arm of the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic has offered supply of petrol and LNG cargoes to Pakistan LNG Ltd (PLL) and Pakistan State Oil (PSO) round the year on credit under a government-to-government (G2G) arrangement to build upon strategically friendly relationship between the two countries.

[Pakistan gets Geographical Indicator tag for basmati](#)

January 28, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan received the Geographical Indicator (GI) tag for its Basmati, paving the way for creating a local registry for this particular strain of rice and making a case in the world markets for its protection as a Pakistani product.

[PIA to cough up \\$2m for plane lease](#)

January 24, 2021, Dawn

The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) is in talks with Irish aircraft broker Peregrine Aviation Charlie Limited to pay about \$2 million as part of an outstanding payment for an aircraft lease agreement by the Dublin-based company AerCap.

[Will Joe Biden Fail the 'Pakistan Test'?](#)

January 26, 2021m, The National Interest

Biden will have to face a test of faith in multilateral organizations and structures when the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) meets to address Pakistan's continued terror problem. Founded in 1989, the FATF is the international

community's chief multilateral apparatus to combat money laundering and terror finance.

[US state secretary offers to prosecute Omar Sheikh following SC acquittal](#)

January 29, 2021, Dawn

In his first statement on Pakistan as the United States secretary of state, Antony Blinken said America was ready to prosecute Omar Saeed Sheikh — the principal accused in the 2002 beheading of American journalist Daniel Pearl — in US courts, a day after he was acquitted by the Supreme Court.

[ADB approves \\$10b lending plan](#)

January 28, 2021, The Express Tribune

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a new five-year indicative lending programme of \$10 billion aimed at supporting Pakistan's efforts to deal with economic and social challenges thrown up by the pandemic and persistent structural weaknesses.

[Pakistan's top fugitive militant commander killed in Afghanistan blast](#)

January 28, 2021, The Express Tribune

Chief of a banned militant group blamed for a deadly reign of terror in a border region of Pakistan has been killed in a roadside bomb attack in southern Afghanistan. Mangal Bagh, a truck cleaner-turned-warlord, held sway over Bara tehsil of the erstwhile Khyber Agency until June 2008 when his armed vigilantes were routed in a security operation. Since then he has been on the run, mostly operating from southern Afghanistan where his loyalists have found safe havens.

[Pakistan, Qatar underscore importance of enhancing defence cooperation](#)

January 29, 2021, The Express Tribune

Armed forces of Pakistan and Qatar have underscored the importance of further enhancing defence relations and cooperation. The resolve was expressed by the two countries during Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa's two-day official visit to Qatar.

[What is the Daniel Pearl murder case, and who is Omar Sheikh?](#)

January 28, 2021, The Indian Express

On Thursday, Pakistan's Supreme Court ordered the release of British-born militant Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, who was convicted for the abduction and murder of US journalist Daniel Pearl in 2002. The court dismissed all charges against Sheikh who has already spent 18 months in prison in Pakistan for the crime.

Afghanistan

[Govt Prepares for Fighting Season as Peace Talks Crawl](#)

January 25, 2021, Tolo News

The Afghan government is preparing for ramped-up fighting amid slow progress in the peace negotiations in Doha, with National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib saying the Taliban does not want peace and that based on intelligence information, the group is making itself ready for the next fighting season.

[Taliban backs vaccine drive as Afghan government receives \\$112 million funding pledge](#)

January 26, 2021, Reuters

The Taliban militant movement gave its backing for a coronavirus vaccination campaign in Afghanistan that has received a \$112 million pledge from the World Health Organization's COVAX programme.

[US Sec. Blinken, Ghani Discuss Peace, Bilateral Ties](#)

January 28, 2021, Tolo News

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a phone conversation with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani discussed the Afghan peace process and the US commitment to an enduring US-Afghan partnership, the US State Department said in a statement on January 28. "The Secretary highlighted robust diplomatic support for the peace process focused on helping the parties to the conflict achieve a durable and just political settlement and permanent and comprehensive ceasefire that benefits all Afghans," the statement said.

[Pentagon warns Taliban on failure to meet commitments on violence, terrorism](#)

January 29, 2021, Reuters

The Biden administration believes it is hard to see a way forward for a negotiated settlement with the Taliban unless the militant group meets its commitments under a 2020 deal, although Washington remains committed to the effort, the Pentagon said on January 28.

[Taliban, Russian officials discuss Afghan peace talks](#)

January 29, 2021, TRT World

A top Taliban negotiator discussed Afghan peace talks with Russian officials in Moscow. Talks were held a week after the Biden administration announced it would review Washington's 2020 deal with the insurgents. Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, the deputy head of the Taliban negotiating team that is

holding peace talks with the Afghan government, met Russian President Vladimir Putin's special envoy for Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, and other Foreign Ministry officials during the Moscow visit.

Bangladesh

[India, Bangladesh hold second consular dialogue](#)

January 29, 2020, ANI

India, Bangladesh held second consular dialogue in New Delhi in which both sides reiterated their commitment to continue to work towards citizen centric consular mechanism.

[50 years: India-Bangladesh Foreign Office meet to launch year long celebrations](#)

January 28, 2021, The Economic Times

India and Bangladesh will be holding the next round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) here on Friday marking launch of yearlong engagements to celebrate 50 years of creation of Bangladesh and 50 years of diplomatic ties.

[Defence ties with India to get 'new dimension' – Bangladesh contingent leader after R-Day march](#)

January 26, 2021, The Print

The Bangladesh armed forces' participation in the Republic Day parade will add a "new dimension" to defence ties between India and Bangladesh, said Colonel Mohammad Mohtashim Hyder Chowdhury, leader of the Bangladesh contingent.

Nepal

[India, Nepal and the lives on the ground](#)

January 26, 2021, The Indian Express

By emphasising on preventing the deterioration of border communities, having rehabilitation alternatives, and offering alternative and sustainable livelihoods, citizens on the ground would cease to remain a statistic in diplomacy.

[Nepal PM thanks India for coronavirus vaccines](#)

January 27, 2021, WION

Nepal's caretaker PM KP Sharma Oli expressed his gratitude for India for providing coronavirus vaccines to Nepal. India has dispatched one million

doses of Covishield vaccine within a week of its rollout in India. On Wednesday, Nepal launched its inoculation drive. Addressing the inauguration ceremony of the inoculation drive in Kathmandu, Oli thanked Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for providing vaccine doses to Nepal.

Sri Lanka

[Sri Lanka vaccinates health workers, troops after India donation](#)

January 29, 2021, Al Jazeera

Sri Lanka began to inoculate front-line health workers, troops and police officers against COVID-19 after India sent half a million free doses of vaccine as part of diplomatic efforts by New Delhi to deepen ties with its neighbours.

[Sri Lanka concedes to Indian demands over Colombo harbor](#)

January 26, 2021, Tamil Guardian

This follows a visit by India's External Affairs Minister, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, who is reported to have laid down "unequivocal terms" for the ECT. The agreement reached enables Sri Lanka to retain a 51% stake whilst the Adani Group, will hold 49%.

Maldives

[Maldives is an important friend, international partner: China](#)

January 27, 2021, Rajje.mv

China has declared Maldives to be a friend and important international partner following successful bilateral consultations held between the two nations on 26 January.

East & South East Asia

China

[Interview: IMF official says China responds "forcefully" to COVID-19 with fiscal policy](#)

January 29, 2021, Xinhuanet

China responded "forcefully" to COVID-19 with fiscal policy, which contributed significantly to its growth in 2020, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) official has said, calling for continued fiscal action to help rebalance the Chinese economy.

[Belarus opens consulate general in China's Chongqing](#)

January 28, 2021, Xinhuanet

The Republic of Belarus officially opened a consulate general in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality.

['China has no genocide,' FM spokesperson repeats three times, urges prudence from Biden admin on Xinjiang issues](#)

January 28, 2021, Global Times

"The most important thing should be repeated three times - China has no genocide; China has no genocide; China has no genocide, period," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said at the daily press conference.

[China-US military relations at 'new starting point'](#)

January 28, 2021, Global Times

In a move, China sent a signal of communication and cooperation to manage risks. Militaries of China and the US recently held a meeting over the search for the remains of US prisoners of war and missing-in-action personnel, as the Chinese Defence Ministry said.

[PLA drills 'a stern warning' to Taiwan, safeguard prospect of peaceful reunification](#)

January 27, 2021, Global Times

By conducting combat exercises in the Taiwan Straits, the Chinese mainland is sending a warning to Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party secessionist authority and the US, experts said, as the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office said the recent drills are "a stern warning to deter foreign forces and Taiwan secessionists."

[Taiwan's display of new missile 'wrongly boosts courage of secessionists'](#)

January 27, 2021, Global Times

Taiwan island's air force conducted a series of exercises, including showcasing a new missile and threatening to attack the Chinese mainland, with mainland experts saying the display of the weapon wrongly boosted the courage of secessionists, and risked accidents amid ongoing exercises by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) near the island. They also said the missile would not even be used if a war breaks out.

[PLA exercises in S.China Sea 'not related to US carrier activity'](#)

January 27, 2021, Global Times

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) started a series of exercises in the South China Sea, which Chinese observers said is likely a regular move and not related to the recent activities of a US aircraft carrier in the region, as foreign media had speculated.

[China's Economy Overtaking the U.S. Will Be Harder Than It Looks](#)

January 25, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

China's relatively rapid recovery from the pandemic has prompted some accelerated predictions of when its economy will surpass that of the U.S. in size. That may be asking the wrong question—if China takes the top spot at all, it may struggle to keep it for long. China's surpassing of the U.S. looks likely from extrapolating recent trend lines, but entails some big assumptions—especially on productivity and currencies. Keeping ahead without a growing population might prove even harder.

[Chinese Braggadocio Falls Flat](#)

January 29, 2021, Taipei Times

Beijing is fond of testing new US presidents before they have had time to get their feet under the desk and measure the drapes in the Oval Office. True to form, on Saturday — just three days after the inauguration of US President Joe Biden — the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force dispatched 13 aircraft — including nuclear-capable bombers and fighter jets — into Taiwan's southwest air defence identification zone. This was followed on Sunday by another incursion into the same airspace by 15 aircraft.

[A World Divided: The Conflict With Chinese Techno-Nationalism Isn't Coming – It's Already Here](#)

January 28, 2021, War on the Rocks

Four years ago, Chinese President Xi Jinping told an elite audience at the World Economic Forum at Davos that "integration into the global economy is a

historical trend," asserting that "any attempt to cut off the flow of capital, technologies, products, industries and people between economies ... runs counter to the historical trend."

[Jack Ma's Ant Plans Major Revamp in Response to Chinese Pressure](#)

January 27, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

Ant Group Co. is planning to turn itself into a financial holding company overseen by China's central bank, responding to pressure to fall fully in line with financial regulations, according to people familiar with the matter.

[Biden's Opening Salvo on Beijing](#)

January 26, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

Initiating his China policy with the most aggressive concatenation of moves against a foreign power that any peacetime U.S. administration has ever launched so early on, President Biden has thrown down a gauntlet that Beijing is unlikely to ignore.

[China's Xi Warns Against Confrontation in Veiled Message to Biden](#)

January 25, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

Chinese President Xi Jinping issued a veiled warning against the new Biden administration's preparations to rally allies to challenge Beijing on a range of issues, urging multilateral coordination to tackle global challenges such as the pandemic.

Japan

[India, Japan in talks with Russia to create trilateral & push Modi's 'Act Far East' policy](#)

January 28, 2021, The Print

India, along with Japan, is now looking to provide a major boost to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Act Far East' policy by kick-starting a trilateral arrangement with Russia this year under the larger Indo-Pacific framework.

[India, Japan review implementation of projects in Northeastern region](#)

January 28, 2021, Mint

India on Thursday urged Japan to green light proposals to boost health care in its northeast including a hospital in Nagaland and a cancer specialty and research centre in Mizoram under the aegis of the Japan India Act East Forum.

[With Biden, Washington returns to normalcy: But 'strategic patience' with China?](#)

January 28, 2021, The Japan Times

A week has passed since U.S. President Joe Biden was sworn in, and Washington is gradually returning to normalcy. One example is the daily press briefings resumed by Press Secretary Jen Psaki at the White House. Full transcripts of these briefings used to be required reading.

['Japan's Marine Corps': The nation's first responders for remote island defense](#)

January 28, 2021, The Japan Times

A Self-Defense Forces unit dubbed "Japan's Marine Corps" made headlines this week when details were revealed of an alleged secret 2015 pact with the U.S. over stationing the amphibious troops at Camp Schwab in Okinawa's Henoko District.

[EU reinstates travel ban from Japan amid surge of COVID-19 cases](#)

January 29, 2021, The Japan Times

The European Union said it had decided to reinstate a travel ban from Japan as the country struggles to cope with a surge of novel coronavirus cases, having declared a state of emergency in Tokyo and other areas.

[Japan pushes back against U.K. plan to boost G7 Asia reach](#)

January 28, 2021, The Japan Times

Japan has raised concerns about British proposals to invite Australia, India and South Korea to a meeting of Group of Seven foreign ministers and have them sign up to a joint charter with the forum, according to a diplomatic cable.

[Japan urges Moscow to release opposition leader, protestors](#)

January 27, 2021, Japan Today

Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi urged Moscow on Tuesday to release Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny and peaceful protestors from detention, joining the United States and the European Union in expressing concerns over the crackdown.

[Japan, U.S. defense chiefs affirm Senkakus fall under security pact](#)

January 24, 2021, Japan Today

Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi and his newly appointed U.S. counterpart Lloyd Austin agreed Sunday the Senkaku Islands fall under the two allies' security treaty, giving Japan reassurance that the U.S. position on the Japanese-controlled, Chinese-claimed islets remains intact under the new administration of President Joe Biden.

Korea

[N.Korean Troops' Uniform Uncannily Like S.Korea's](#)

January 25, 2021, The Chosun Ilbo

Some North Korean troops were spotted in camouflage outfits at a military parade in Pyongyang on Jan. 14 that looked much the same as their South Korean counterparts'. "Based on analysis of images of the parade released by the North, we've found that North Korean troops wore the same pixelated camouflage as the South Korean military's," a military source here said.

[Defections of high-level North Korean officials are telltale symptoms of internal difficulties](#)

January 28, 2021, The Korea Times

The arrival in South Korea of a former acting ambassador at the North Korean Embassy in Kuwait just over a year ago has renewed attention to a series of defections to the South by high-level diplomats under Kim Jong-un's rule.

[North Korea's acting envoy to Kuwait has defected to South Korea: lawmaker](#)

January 25, 2021, The Korea Times

North Korea's acting ambassador to Kuwait has defected to South Korea, the latest in a recent string of high-profile escapes from the isolated country, a South Korean lawmaker said.

[South Korea expects flexible solutions to joint military exercise](#)

January 25, 2021, The Korea Times

Unification Minister Lee In-young hoped Monday that South Korea and the United States will find a flexible way to conduct their envisaged combined military exercises to ensure North Korea does not react with tension-stoking provocations.

[Biden's security team raises hopes for rapid North Korea policy review](#)

January 25, 2021, The Korea Times

With the new U.S. administration busy finalizing the roster of its national security team, questions are arising in South Korea over when President Joe Biden will unveil his policy toward North Korea.

[Civic groups demand suspension of military drills with US for confidence building with N. Korea](#)

January 28, 2021, The Korea Herald

Nearly 400 local and foreign civic groups on Thursday urged South Korea and the United States to suspend joint military drills as a "major confidence-building measure" toward North Korea.

Southeast Asia

[Philippine Navy To Start Upgrade Of Its Three Del Pilar-Class Frigates](#)

January 25, 2021, Navy Recognition

According to information published by the Asia Pacific Defense Journal on January 22, 2021, the Philippine Navy expects to start the upgrade of its three Del Pilar-class frigates within the year in collaboration with the South Korean company Hanwha Systems.

[Russia To Supply Pantsir-S1 Air Defence Systems To Myanmar](#)

January 25, 2021, Airforce Technology

The defence ministries of Russia and Myanmar have reached an agreement for the supply of Pantsir-S1 air defence systems.

[Singapore Hopes To Facilitate Deeper Partnership Between ASEAN, India](#)

January 26, 2021, Business Standard

Singapore hopes to facilitate a deeper partnership between the ASEAN and India that would be to everyone's benefit as deeper integration with the region would enable greater access to significant opportunities, Singapore Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Tan See Leng, said.

[China Deploys Warships In South China Sea After US Aircraft Carrier Sails By](#)

January 26, 2021, Hindustan Times

China deployed warships including amphibious ones for a naval drill in the disputed waters of the South China Sea (SCS) in the backdrop of the US sending an aircraft carrier group in the maritime zone for a "freedom of the seas" operation.

[Rush Order On India Signings](#)

January 27, 2021, The Phnom Penh Post

Cambodia and India have agreed to speed up negotiations on a number of key documents that will lead to the signing of two significant accords.

[Singapore Navy Unveils New Flotilla To Boost Security Capabilities](#)

January 27, 2021, Naval Technology

The Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) has launched its new 'Maritime and Security Response Flotilla (MSRF)'.

[Philippines Protests New China Law As "Verbal Threat Of War"](#)

January 27, 2021 Outlook

The Philippines has protested a new Chinese law that authorises its coast guard to fire on foreign vessels and destroy other countries' structures on islands it claims, Manila's top diplomat said.

[U.S. stands with SE Asian Countries Against China Pressure, Blinken says](#)

January 28, 2021, Reuters

The United States rejects China's maritime claims in the South China Sea beyond what it is permitted under international law and stands with Southeast Asian nations resisting its pressure, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said.

[Beijing Stages South China Sea Naval Exercises, Warns US](#)

January 28, 2021, 9 News

Beijing will stage naval exercises in the disputed South China Sea after it denounced the US for sending warships to the region.

Central & West Asia

Central Asia

[The fall of Kyrgyzstan's parliamentary experiment and the rise of Sadyr Japarov](#)

January 23, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

As the attempt to build a parliamentary system has failed in Kyrgyzstan and the country has chosen a presidential form of government, the newly-elected president, Sadyr Japarov, faces many challenges, both political and economic, and is yet to meet the Kyrgyz people's expectations of a better future.

[Despite drop, China maintains edge as Uzbekistan's top trade partner](#)

January 27, 2021, Eurasia Net

China consolidated its role as Uzbekistan's main trading partner. According to end-of-year figures for 2020 from the Uzbek State Statistics Committee, bilateral trade amounted to \$6.4 billion, with the bulk of that traffic favouring Beijing. While China's exports hit \$4.5 billion, imports from Uzbekistan amounted to \$1.9 billion.

[Facebook's 'Supreme Court' upholds limits on Karabakh War hate speech](#)

January 29, 2021, Eurasia Net

Facebook's new Oversight Board is taking a firm stance in favour of free speech. In its initial set of rulings, the body overruled employees who had blocked controversial posts. But there was one exception: It upheld the removal of a post that was deemed demeaning to Azerbaijanis.

[Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan agreement advances Caspian gas cooperation](#)

January 22, 2021, Eurasianet

Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have signed a landmark agreement to jointly develop a long-disputed Caspian gas field, a move that could pave the way for the transit of Turkmenistan's massive gas reserves to Europe.

[Kyrgyzstan: Japarov still stumbling toward coherent foreign policy](#)

January 26, 2021, Eurasia Net

Kyrgyzstan's president-elect is in a strong position domestically after romping home in a vote lacking heavyweight opponents. But his foreign game is looking weaker.

[China gradually opens its markets to Central Asia](#)

January 25, 2021, Eurasianet

China is opening its markets to Central Asia's fledgling food exporters, embarking on a new phase of economic engagement with the region.

West Asia

[PM Modi Holds Talks with UAE to Strengthen Bilateral Ties post-Covid](#)

January 28, 2021, Mint

India and the United Arab Emirates on Thursday (January 28) discussed possible opportunities for diversifying trade and investment links to strengthen bilateral ties in a post Covid-19 pandemic world.

[Biden Administration Pauses Weapons Sales to Saudi Arabia, UAE](#)

January 27, 2021, AL Jazeera

The United States is reviewing weapons sales to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) authorised by former President Donald Trump, a move that Secretary of State Antony Blinken said was "typical" of a new administration.

[Israel Military Revising Operational Plans against Iran: IDF Chief of Staff](#)

January 27, 2021, AL Jazeera

Israel's top general warned attack plans against Iran were being revised and said any US return to the 2015 nuclear accord with Tehran would be "wrong".

[India Dispatches Covishield Vaccines to Bahrain, Sri Lanka](#)

January 28, 2021, Mint

After providing coronavirus vaccines to several countries including Bangladesh, Nepal and Maldives, India on Thursday (January 28) established its position as a reliable partner in COVID-19 assistance by dispatching Covishield vaccines to Bahrain and Sri Lanka.

[Consistently Supported Palestinian Nation-building Efforts, Says India's Permanent Representative to the UN](#)

January 26, 2021, WION

India has reiterated its position on the Israel-Palestine conflict and pointed out its consistent support to "Palestinian nation-building efforts" during a discussion on the issue at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

[Normalisation of Ties between Israel, Some Arab States Can Promote Regional Cooperation: India](#)

January 26, 2021, News18

India said that the normalisation of relations between Israel and some Arab states is an important development that has the potential to promote regional cooperation for peace and security and can provide the necessary momentum for resumption of direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine.

[Dubai-based IFIICC to Unlock Opportunity for NRI Businesses in Israel](#)

January 26, 2021, Gulf News

India's strong historical relationships with the UAE and Israel could help establish business relationships among the three countries while unlocking growth opportunities in other nations where there is a strong Indian diaspora. The International Federation of the Indo-Israel Chambers of Commerce (IFIICC) hopes to facilitate that process through knowledge sharing, strategic partnerships and cultural bonds.

[Qatar-India Trade Volume to Soon Return to pre-COVID level](#)

January 26, 2021, The Peninsula Qatar

Ambassador of India to Qatar, Dr. Deepak Mittal has said Qatar-India trade volume is expected to return to pre-COVID-19 level by middle of this year. "Bilateral trade between Qatar and India crossed \$11bn in 2019. Despite COVID-19 challenges the trade volume between two countries from April to November in 2020 was about \$7bn which was a good growth".

[Iran Starts Clearing Basmati Rice Dues](#)

January 28, 2021, The Economic Times

Iran, the largest importer of basmati rice has started clearing the dues of Indian exporters which have mounted to more than Rs 1,700 crore since 2019.

[US Sanctions on Iran to Remain, Antony Blinken Says](#)

January 27, 2021, Voice of America

Top U.S. diplomat Antony Blinken has signaled that U.S. sanctions on Iran will remain in place for some time as Washington waits to see if Tehran verifiably stops violating a 2015 nuclear deal with world powers before potentially rejoining the deal that the prior U.S. administration quit.

[UAE, Bahrain: We Need 'Unified Voice' with Israel on Iran's Missiles, Nukes](#)

January 26, 2021, The Times of Israel

The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain called for a coordinated effort with Israel to press the new US administration on Iran. Speaking alongside Israel's Foreign

Minister Gabi Ashkenazi, Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashed Alzayani stressed the concern the countries share over Tehran's nuclear program, ballistic missiles, and activities across the Middle East.

United States

United States

[How will Biden deal with China?](#)

January 23, 2021, The Japan Times

Biden faces a host of daunting foreign policy challenges, from repairing fractured alliances to recommitting to global responsibilities. Chief among the many conundrums is the growing China challenge.

[U.S. sends carrier into South China Sea as Chinese bombers fly near Taiwan](#)

January 24, 2021, The Japan Times

The U.S. sent an aircraft carrier strike group into the disputed South China Sea the same day China dispatched a fleet of 13 warplanes — including nuclear-capable bombers — into the southwestern corner of Taiwan's air defense identification zone.

[What Joe Biden's pick for ambassador to UN said on permanent Security Council seat for India](#)

January 28, 2021, Mint

US President Joe Biden's pick for the ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield did not explicitly commit the support of the new administration for India to be a permanent member of the Security Council.

[Rajnath Singh discusses India-China tensions with US counterpart Lloyd Austin](#)

January 27, 2021, Mint

India's tensions with China figured in telephone call between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and the newly appointed US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin on Wednesday.

[India aims to tackle terrorism, climate change with US: MEA](#)

January 28, 2021, Big News Network

India will closely work with the United States on combating the scourge of terrorism, maritime security, cybersecurity, and peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region under President Joe Biden's administration, said the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday.

[In multiple messages, Joe Biden warns Beijing over expansionism](#)

January 28, 2021, Hindustan Times

In multiple calls and statements, President Joe Biden and his top security officials have underscored support for allies Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, signaling Washington's rejection of China's disputed territorial claims in those areas.

[New US defense secretary speaks to Gantz, vows to uphold Israel's military edge](#)

January 29, 2021, The Times of Israel

Defense Minister Benny Gantz spoke Thursday evening with newly appointed US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, discussing the Iranian threat to regional stability and the defense cooperation between the two allies, the Defense Ministry said in a statement.

[Boeing gets US approval to offer F-15EX to India](#)

January 28, 2021, The Times of India

Boeing has received a licence from the US government to offer its F-15EX fighter jet to the Indian air force, a senior executive said on Thursday.

[The United States Must Move Forward, Not Back, on Iran](#)

January 27, 2021, Foreign Affairs

The new administration of U.S. President Joe Biden has proposed for Iran and the United States to return to full compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. But this prospect poses considerable risks to regional and even global security. A better approach, in our view, would be one that aims to reach a modest interim agreement, or "JCPOA minus," after which talks would focus on achieving a more restrictive nuclear deal than the original, or "JCPOA plus."

Europe & Russia

Europe

[EU urges US to draft joint rule book to rein in tech giants](#)

January 26, 2021, Associated Press

The European Union called Tuesday on U.S. President Joe Biden to help draw up a common rule book to rein in the power of big tech companies like Facebook and Twitter and combat the spread of fake news that is eating away at Western democracies.

[EU, US welcome resumption of talks between Turkey, Greece](#)

January 26, 2021, Hurriyet Daily News

The U.S. and the EU welcomed on Jan. 25 the first round of talks between Greece and Turkey in nearly five years that are intended to resolve energy and border disputes in the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean.

[EU jitters over US return to Paris Agreement](#)

January 22, 2021, Politico

The EU got its wish when U.S. President Joe Biden issued an order to reenter the Paris Agreement — but now that America is back, Europe is worried about being outcompeted and outspent.

[Time for Europe and US to work together on China](#)

January 22, 2021, Politico

Disputes among allies will only give China a leg up. Given the stakes of this contest, many on both sides of the Atlantic are asking: Where does Europe stand?

[Britain's G7 'democracy summit' not an anti-China coalition with Joe Biden, says EU diplomat](#)

January 26, 2021, South China Morning Post

The G7 summit scheduled this year in Britain, which the British government has expanded and presented as a summit between 10 leading democracies, will not be a coalition against Beijing, the European Union's ambassador to China Nicholas Chapuis has said.

[Faced With Vaccine Shortages, EU Set to Impose Export Controls](#)

January 28, 2021, Bloomberg

The European Union is poised to tighten rules on the export of Covid-19 vaccines, risking a major escalation in the global battle to secure access to the life-saving shots.

[Stop endless referendum talk, UK PM Johnson tells Scotland](#)

January 28, 2021, Reuters

Prime Minister Boris Johnson told Scottish nationalists on Thursday to stop talking “endlessly” about a new independence referendum, saying most people wanted to see Britain “bouncing back more strongly together” after the COVID-19 pandemic eases.

[Greece, France Finalize \\$2.8 Billion Fighter Jet Deal](#)

January 26, 2021, Voice of America

Greece and France have sealed a \$2.8 billion deal for the purchase of 18 Rafale fighter jets for the Greek air force. The deal is part of a larger weapons purchase program that Greece is carrying out as it sits down to negotiate a solution to a growing dispute with Turkey over energy rights in the eastern Mediterranean.

[EU-China investment treaty: top European negotiator Maria Martin-Prat defends forced-labour provisions amid criticism](#)

January 27, 2021, South China Morning Post

The chief negotiator of the European Union’s new investment deal with China has defended the forced-labour provisions, saying that Beijing’s obligations to ratify key international standards “can be measured over time”.

[US defense secretary says Germany is ‘highly valued’ station for American troops](#)

January 28, 2021, Military Times

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told Germany’s Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer in his first conversation with her since taking up his new post that Germany is “highly valued” as a station for American soldiers, the Defense Ministry said Thursday.

Russia

[Soldiers Practice Military Drills Across Russia](#)

January 28, 2021, The Moscow Times

Over 3500 military personnel have started martial exercises across six regions in Russia, the state-run TASS news agency reported.

[Russia Opposed to Widening Scope of Iran Nuclear Deal](#)

January 27, 2021, The Moscow Times

Russia does not support expanding the Iran nuclear deal to other issues like Tehran's regional influence should the United States decide to rejoin, Moscow's deputy envoy to the UN said.

[Geopolitics, Sanctions and Social Media Giants: Putin's Davos Speech, in Quotes](#)

January 27, 2021, The Moscow Times

Russian President Vladimir Putin addressed the World Economic Forum in Davos for the first time in more than a decade.

[Russia calls on US to stop ungrounded insinuations on chemical weapons use - ambassador](#)

January 29, 2021, TASS

Moscow calls on Washington to complete as soon as possible its program on the elimination of its chemical weapons stocks and to stop making groundless insinuations in regard to Russia on this issue, Russian Ambassador Anatoly Antonov stated.

[Roscosmos reaches agreements to build satellites for several countries](#)

January 29, 2021, TASS

Russia's space agency, Roscosmos, is planning to ink a number of contracts in 2021 to build satellites for other countries, agreements in principle have already been achieved with several states.

[Putin to sign law on ratifying agreement on New START's extension soon – Kremlin](#)

January 28, 2021, TASS

Russian President Vladimir Putin will immediately sign a law on ratifying the agreement on extending New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) as soon as he gets the document.

[Russia, US ready for dialogue despite different opinions on situation in Ukraine – Kremlin](#)

January 27, 2021, TASS

Terminology used by Russia and the US describing the situation in Ukraine indicates serious differences of opinion but the sides are ready for a dialogue.

Africa & Latin America

Latin America

[Some Colombians fear ex-paramilitary leader deported from US](#)

January 26, 2021, Associated Press

On the north coast of Colombia there is anxiety over the return to the South American country of one of the most feared former paramilitary commanders: Hernán Giraldo Serna. "El Patrón" (the boss) or "El Taladro" (the drill, as he became known for sexually abusing girls in the area) stepped on Colombian soil Monday after finishing a 16-year sentence in a U.S. prison for drug trafficking earlier this month.

[EU urges dialogue in Venezuela to set up new elections](#)

January 25, 2021, AP News

The European Union called Monday for broad political talks in Venezuela to set up new elections, and warned that it stands ready to slap sanctions on more senior Venezuelan officials in the country if they undermine democracy or take part in human rights violations.

[Mexican leader says Biden offers \\$4B for Central America](#)

January 23, 2021, AP News

President Joe Biden's first calls to foreign leaders went to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador at a strained moment for the U.S. relationship with its North American neighbors.

[Uruguay will partially reopen its borders as of February](#)

January 28, 2021, Merco Press

Uruguayan president Luis Lacalle Pou announced the partial lifting of the borders' total closure which had been established last December 20, but all other measures that had been announced on that date remain in full compliance.

[Argentine traders and millers discussing options to avoid a ban on wheat exports](#)

January 28, 2021, Merco Press

Argentina is worried about domestic food prices and inflation, and as it happened a few weeks ago with an attempt to ban corn exports, a similar situation apparently is happening with wheat, and the different actors involved

are working on measures aimed at securing the wheat supply and reasonable bread and pasta prices.

[Chilean president ratifies support for Argentina claims in the Falklands' dispute](#)

January 29, 2021, Merco Press

Chilean President Sebastián Piñera ratified his administration's support for "Argentina's sovereignty claims over the Falklands/Malvinas and other South Atlantic islands," and called for Argentina and UK to resume talks to find a peaceful solution to the controversy in the framework of UN resolutions on the issue.

[Brazil on the brink of financial default, points out the Financial Times](#)

January 28, 2021, Merco Press

Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro has been skeptical of the coronavirus pandemic and the effectiveness of different vaccines to contain it, arguing that the economy, jobs and activity, were the priority above sanitary recommendations.

[Ex Brazilian president Michel Temer contracted as an advisor for Huawei's 5G](#)

January 26, 2021, Merco Press

China's Huawei has just hired a former president of Brazil to act as an advisor on 5G networking in the region. Through the new hiring, the company aims at ensuring the growth of the newer and faster bandwidth in the local market just prior to the auction for 5G wireless networks.

[Uruguay will partially reopen its borders as of February](#)

January 29, 2021, Merco Press

Uruguayan president Luis Lacalle Pou announced on Wednesday the partial lifting of the borders' total closure which had been established last December 20, but all other measures that had been announced on that date remain in full compliance.

[New Zealand and China upgraded their free trade agreement: Bad news for Mercosur](#)

January 27 2021, Merco Press

China and New Zealand signed the upgrading protocol of their free trade agreement (FTA) via video link on Tuesday with new commitments in trade market entry, investment, and other key aspects.

[Europe calls on Venezuela for broad talks and new elections, warns of more sanctions](#)

January 27, 2021, Merco Press

The European Union called for broad political talks in Venezuela to set up new elections and warned that it stands ready to slap sanctions on more senior Venezuelan officials in the country if they undermine democracy or take part in human rights violations.

Africa

[Darfur's ethnic nightmare returns to haunt Sudan's civilian rulers](#)

January 27, 2021, Arab News

Just when the international community thought it had one less conflict to contend with, concerns were reignited earlier this month as news broke of tribal clashes in Sudan's Darfur region. By the time the dust had settled, at least 250 lives had been lost, hundreds of people had suffered injuries and more than 100,000 Sudanese had been displaced in two different states.

[Pirates who kidnapped Turkish seamen off Nigeria make 1st contact](#)

January 28, 2021, Daily Sabah

Pirates who attacked a Turkish vessel and kidnapped seamen off the coast of West Africa on Thursday made the first contact with the shipping company to discuss a ransom.

[Mozambicans warned to brace for more floods](#)

January 29, 2021, Africa News

Mozambique's relief agency, the National Institute for Disaster Risk Management and Reduction (INGRD), has warned that more than 30,000 people may be affected by flooding in the next two days in the southern Gaza province.

[Somalia rejects probe report on Kenya's interference on its internal affairs](#)

January 27, 2021, Africa News

Somalia criticized the findings of a fact-finding commission, saying that it found no evidence showing that Kenya was interfering in Somalia's affairs.

[DR Congo parliament votes out pro-Kabila PM](#)

January 27, 2021, Africa News

Lawmakers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have dismissed the Prime Minister Sylvestre Ilunga Ilunkamba evening during a parliament plenary session held in Kinshasa.

[Cameroon strengthens its security arrangements for CHAN 2021](#)

January 28, 2021, The Africa Report

The Cameroonian defence and security forces are particularly vigilant in the English-speaking regions, especially in the South-West, where the African Nations Championship (CHAN) is taking place until 7 February.

[Africa: AU chair Ramaphosa calls out 'painful irony' of vaccine access](#)

January 28, 2021, The Africa Report

African Union (AU) chair Cyril Ramaphosa told a high-powered meeting of regional and global leaders about the "painful irony" of clinical trials being conducted on the continent, which is now struggling to gain access to supply.



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