



The emergence of India as a strong economic power is receiving widespread recognition in the region and beyond. Today, it has expanded its footprints and engagement in multiple fields across all continents. Accordingly, India's foreign policy and international conducts should reflect upon its new global stature. In this backdrop, Ananta Aspen Centre is pleased to launch a new initiative -- a bi-weekly digest of all the major news related to India's Foreign Policy. Our sincere effort is to keep you informed and updated on all the major international developments that have implications on India's foreign policy. Hope you will benefit from the initiative. We value your feedback, comments and recommendations.

India and the World – an Update

A bi-weekly News Digest on India's Foreign Policy
(Volume – 4)

February 14th-February 28th, 2014

Neighbourhood

South Asia

Pakistan

[Abdul Basit new Pakistan High Commissioner to India](#)

The Hindu | February 17th, 2014

He will replace Salman Bashir in India.

[Indian Navy official put on trial for conspiring with Pak agencies](#)

PTI / Indian Express | February 17th, 2014

Indian Navy official Chand Kumar Prasad has been booked under the Official Secret Act for passing on sensitive information to Pakistani agencies.

[Pakistan militant resurfaces, ignites Indian fears of attacks](#)

Reuters / New Straits Times | February 18th, 2014

Azhar was named by an Indian court as the prime suspect in a 2001 attack on India's parliament aimed at taking top political leaders hostage.

[Pakistan assures India of an early outcome in 26/11 trial](#)

PTI / DNA | February 20th, 2014

India last year handed over five key documents running into nearly 600 pages for use in the trial so that prosecutors could proceed against the accused.

[Salman Khurshid rakes up 26/11 probe with Aziz](#)

Times of India | February 21st, 2014

Aziz assured Khurshid that Islamabad was looking at expediting the trial and that the whole process could be brought to an end in the next two months, official sources said.

[Pak seeks release of prisoners in India](#)

IANS / Kashmir Dispatch | February 22nd, 2014

Foreign Office spokesman Tasneem Aslam said that Islamabad has demanded that all of its prisoners who have completed their sentences should be released on humanitarian grounds.

Afghanistan

[India to provide helicopters to Afghanistan soon: Salman Khurshid](#)

PTI / NDTV | February 15th, 2014

Earlier in Kandahar, Mr Karzai told journalists from India he was not dissatisfied with India's response to his request to supply military equipment to strengthen Afghan security forces.

[India-backed university in former Taliban base a breakthrough: Salman Khurshid](#)

PTI / Times of India | February 16th, 2014

About 80 per cent of Afghan people depends on agriculture for livelihood. Also, nearly 60 per cent of GDP of the country is from the farm sector which still lacks modern agriculture practices.

[Hamid Karzai hopes Pakistan will give transit route to India](#)

PTI / DNA | February 16th, 2014

The Indian External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid said India will continue to push for Chabahar Port in Iran as an alternative route to mineral-rich Afghanistan.

Bangladesh

[Stable, prosperous Bangladesh in India's interest: President](#)

PTI / The Indian Express | February 15th, 2014 The President said both India and Bangladesh have constituted Parliamentary Friendship Groups to strengthen cooperation between the two Parliaments.

Bhutan

[Bhutan is yet to come out of its Indian Rupee reserve crisis](#)

The Economic Times | February 14th, 2014

Despite having apparently different floating value, Bhutan currency Ngultrum (Nu) is officially pegged at-par with Indian Rupee. At the same time, India is the largest trade partner of Bhutan.

Eventually, maintaining as high as possible reserve of INR is always a priority for Bhutan finance department.

Nepal

[India-Nepal rail link: Major work completed on Indian side](#)

PTI / DNA | February 21st, 2014

[BIMSTEC SUMMIT: Koirala to meet Indian PM in Myanmar](#)

ekantipur | February 27th, 2014

As the leader of the Nepali delegation, Koirala will also meet with leaders of the regional grouping from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, Myanmar, Bhutan and Thailand on the sidelines, said officiating Foreign Secretary Shanker Das Bairagi, who is leaving for the summit on Thursday.

Sri Lanka

[India set to back UN investigation into Sri Lanka war 'crimes'](#)

The Telegraph (UK) | February 25th, 2014

As the biggest regional power, India's support will also increase the likelihood that next month's United Nations Human Rights Committee meeting in Geneva will pass a resolution calling for an international investigation.

Asia Pacific

China

[It's official: China overtakes India as top consumer of gold](#)

CNBC | February 18th, 2014

A steep drop in gold prices during the April-June quarter triggered a buying spree among mainland consumers – and it was that quarter which had the strongest impact on the annual demand numbers.

[India, China to hold war games and strengthen maritime security cooperation](#)

DNA | February 25th, 2014

Last year, there were over 150 incidents of incursions and face-off between the two armies while patrolling. In April, a PLA platoon level patrol team intruded 18 km into Indian territory in DBO in Ladakh.

[China offers to keep momentum of border talks](#)

The Hindu | February 25th, 2014

The offer came during two-and-a-half hours of discussions, led by Defence Secretary R.K. Mathur and the visiting Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), Lt. Gen. Wang Guanzhong.

Japan

[Delhi fails to win Japan's 'Nuclear Trust'](#)

Mainstream Weekly | February 15th, 2014

Given the unpredictability of Japanese politics and the entrenched non-proliferation lobbies in Japan, Delhi rightly assessed that this is the time to strike when the iron is hot, when Abe is around.

[‘Delay in n-deal with Japan may hit progress on atomic plants’](#)

PTI / First Post | February 17th, 2014

According to sources, the NSA Shiv Shankar Menon told the French officials that Abe should be persuaded to fast-track the nuclear deal with India as the nuclear deal with Japan and India could not be signed during Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's recent visit to Delhi last month.

Myanmar

[Indian engineering exporters set sights on Myanmar](#)

PTI / Economic Times | February 16th, 2014

An EEPC India delegation recently visited Yangon to prepare the engineering exporters to establish their presence in Myanmar and showcase the country's engineering prowess.

[Indian representative calls for enhancement to India-Myanmar trade](#)

IANS / Business Standard | February 17th, 2014

The Indian Ambassador to Myanmar said that Mizoram has the potential to serve the needs of Myanmar in education, health, power supply and industries sectors.

[India to sell sonar equipment to Myanmar: A K Antony](#)

PTI / Economic Times | February 19th, 2014

He said Defence Research and Development Organisation is not involved in export as it has been given the mandate for research and development of various systems and technologies for the use of the armed forces.

The United States

[US-India trade groups cautions Washington against anti-India steps](#)

IANS / DNA | February 13th, 2014

India's commitment to democracy, especially in a troubled region of the world, means that America should embrace the relationship even when there are the inevitable disagreements on government policies, USIBC said.

[Khobragade case: India questioned US authority](#)

The Hindu | February 18th, 2014

[India becomes biggest foreign buyer of US weapons](#)

CNBC / Financial Times | February 24th, 2014

India, with total defense imports of \$5.9 billion, became the most enthusiastic buyer from the U.S., knocking Saudi Arabia out of the top spot with purchases that included Boeing's C-17A strategic transport aircraft and P-8I Maritime Patrol Aircraft.

[Devyani was entitled to immunity: U.N](#)

PTI / The Hindu | February 25th, 2014

Devyani's Lawyer, Mr. Arshack, said that the 39-year-old diplomat was credentialed as Special Advisor to the U.N. from August 26 to December 31, 2013, making her immune from arrest on December 12 on visa fraud charges.

[India to block US trade probes, ready for fight at WTO](#)

Reuters / The Economic Times | February 26th, 2014

On Wednesday, the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) - which represents about 50 US business groups - asked the US Trade Representative (USTR) to designate India a Priority Foreign Country in its 2014 report.

Australia

[Australia seeks to draw India into tighter embrace with nuclear deal](#)

Times of India | February 17th, 2014

The present Australian government's eagerness to improve ties with India is palpable-driven mostly by economic and security reasons, but perhaps also by an element of enthusiasm on the part of Abbott and Bishop for a country that's part of the Commonwealth, is the world's largest democracy, speaks English and plays cricket, and whose diaspora is largely an object of admiration and affection in their adopted country.

Europe

[India, Russia to set up more Kudankulam units, new n-plants](#)

IANS / Business Standard | February 19th, 2014

Spurred by Japan's Fukushima disaster, activists of the People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE) have held protests at the Kudankulam plant, citing safety and environment concerns.

[No death penalty for Italian marines, Centre drops anti-piracy charge](#)

Times of India | February 24th, 2014

The Centre informed the Supreme Court that the Italian marines, accused of killing two fishermen, would not be prosecuted under the anti-piracy law SUA (Suppression of Unlawful Acts).

[Germany visa application centres to open in Kochi and Kolkata](#)

The Hindu | February 26th, 2014

The centres are meant to extend their collection of visa applications and delivery process to these destinations through GVAC.

[Sujatha Singh calls for wider Indian security cooperation with SCO](#)

Russia and India Report | February 27th, 2014 India has been an observer with the SCO since 2005. Last year, Russian Foreign Minister said that Moscow supported New Delhi's bid to become a member of the grouping. China, which was an obstacle to India joining the SCO, has also accepted India's bid and proposed Pakistan to be a member of the grouping as well.

The Middle East

[Bahrain seeks to boost ties with India during King Hamad Al Khalifa's first visit](#)

PTI / NDTV | February 18th, 2014

Bahrain is an important trading partner for India with non-oil bilateral trade in 2012-13 exceeding USD 1.3 billion.

[HM the King's visit to India hailed](#)

Bahrain News Agency | February 23rd, 2014

Speaking during the weekly post cabinet press conference, the Minister of State said the visit was in

line with Bahrain's foreign policy aiming to build strong relations with countries all over the world, based on friendship and mutual interests.

[India ready to pay \\$1.5 billion to Iran](#)

Reuters / Times of India | February 25th, 2014

Tehran is allowed to receive \$450 million from India on March 1 if it satisfies targets set down in the November deal, according to the payment schedule. It can then receive two further tranches of \$550 million on March 7 and April 10 without having to meet further conditions.

[Balancing act: India engages with Saudi Arabia and Iran](#)

Times of India | February 26th, 2014

Saudi Arabia is the fulcrum of India's new "Look Middle East" policy — economic/strategic outreach to a region with which India has over \$180 billion of trade, source of 60 per cent of India's energy supplies and home to 7 million Indians with massive remittances.

[Nuclear talks proceeding, negotiations difficult: Iran foreign minister](#)

Live Mint | February 27th, 2014

He also demanded that western countries within P5+1 show more respect to Iran and desist from making threats that he described as counterproductive.

[Iran's foreign minister to meet Salman Khurshid today](#)

Times of India | February 28th, 2014

His visit overlapped with the maiden visit by the Prince Salman, crown prince of Saudi Arabia, who signed a defence cooperation agreement with India on Wednesday.

Latin America

[India, Argentina discuss cooperation in renewable energy](#)

PTI / Economic Times | February 17th, 2014

Collaboration in sectors of bio-diesel and possibilities of commerce and business in bio-fuel were also discussed in the meeting, a government release said.

Miscellaneous

[Emulate Kejriwal, says Pakistani daily](#)

IANS / AVP News | February 16th, 2014

An editorial "Delhi at a distance" in the Dawn appeared two days after Kejriwal tendered his resignation, bringing the curtains down on an Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government that lasted 49 days in Delhi.

[India for institutional reform within SAARC: Salman Khurshid](#)

PTI / Economic Times | February 20th, 2014

The Indian External Affairs Minister said that the SAARC has traversed a significant distance since it came into being in 1985 and there is little doubt about its achievements...while the overall direction of our progress is positive, there is a need to move faster and to add momentum to cooperation within the SAARC framework.

[10 Indian-Americans in fray](#)

PTI / Hindustan Times | February 24th, 2014

Ami Bera, the only Indian-American Congressman and the third ever, is seeking re-election from the 7th Congressional district of California.

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