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Russia Suspended Participation In New Start Treaty

President Vladimir Putin said that Russia was [suspending](#) its participation in New START, its last nuclear arms limitation treaty with the United States. In a speech where he blamed Ukraine's Western allies for Russia's ongoing military action, President Putin also accused the United States of testing new advanced nuclear weapons and the NATO of seeking to attack Russia's nuclear facilities.

Russia's Economy Contracted By 2.1%

Russian economy [contracted](#) by 2.1 per cent in 2022, the government's statistics agency Rosstat said on February 20, absorbing Western sanctions better than expected. Meanwhile, annual inflation was stable at around 12 per cent in January 2023, having risen to 17.8 per cent – the highest level in two decades – in April 2022 as the first Western sanctions began to be implemented.

Russia's Gas Exports Shrank By 25%

Russia announced on, February 14, that its [gas exports](#) shrank by 25 per cent in 2022. Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak attributed the fall in gas exports to "the refusal of European countries to buy Russian gas." He also attributed the fall in exports to the "sabotage" of pipelines. Gas production in 2022 amounted to 673.8 billion cubic meters (bcm) with exports decreasing by 25.1 per cent to 184.4 bcm. Meanwhile, Russia's gas exports to China via the Power of Siberia increased by 48 per cent, reaching 15.4 bcm.

Russia Warned Israel Against Supplying Arms To Ukraine

Russia, on February 1, warned Israel [against supplying weapons](#) to Ukraine after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that he was considering military aid for Kyiv and was also willing to mediate in the conflict. Since the beginning of the confrontation in February 2022, Israel has largely adopted a cautious position, appearing to maintain a neutral position. Israel has also emphasised on its special ties with Russia, with more than a million of its citizens being of Slavic origin.

Turkiye-Armenia Border Reopened

The Turkiye- Armenia [border](#) re-opened after three decades, post the recent earthquakes in Turkiye. The border was earlier closed by Turkiye as a sign of solidarity with Azerbaijan, following the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 1990s. This time, the border was opened with the aim of sending humanitarian aid to Turkiye and Syria. The border opening was followed by a [visit](#) of the Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan to Turkiye on 15 February wherein he met his Turkish counterpart. The foreign ministers discussed the role of humanitarian assistance in helping normalise bilateral relations.

4th Edition Of Indo-Uzbek Dustlik Exercises Held

Commencing 21 February, India and Uzbekistan conducted a [two-week Dustlik](#) (friendship) military exercise in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district. It involved counter-terrorism operations and tactical drills.

Kazakhstan Supported China's Ukraine Peace Plan

On 25 February, Kazakhstan's Foreign Ministry [expressed](#) support towards China's peace plan to resolve the Russia-Ukraine conflict on the ground that it could lead to a cessation of bloodshed. The ministry also called upon all concerned parties to demonstrate goodwill and resume talks.

US Secretary Of State Visited Central Asia

US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken [visited](#) Central Asia on 28 February. He held a C5+1 meeting and travelled to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The US sought to project itself as a reliable partner of the Central Asian Republics. Key issues discussed [involved](#) the importance of sovereignty and territorial integrity, regional independence and diversified trade routes.

Chinese Foreign Minister Visited Europe

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi made a week-long visit to Europe starting 16 February. The visit sought to boost China-Europe relations amidst a growing trust deficit. He met President Macron to discuss the Ukrainian crisis, food security and financing capacities. In Italy, he [met](#) the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Antonio Tajani. He [participated](#) in Munich Security Conference and advocated the common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security concept of President Xi. Yi also met President Putin and proposed a [12-point peace plan](#) to mediate in the war between Russia and Ukraine.

Olaf Scholz Visited India

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited India from 25- 27 February. This marked the first standalone visit of a [German Chancellor](#) to India since the 2011 biennial Inter-Governmental Consultation (IGC). Key areas of discussion revolved around bolstering economic ties, security and defence cooperation, and triangular cooperation in third countries.

59th Munich Security Conference Held

The 59th [Munich Security Conference](#) (MSC) took place from 17- 19 February in Munich. 40 Heads of State, 25 Defence Ministers, around 50 Foreign Ministers, and representatives of think-tanks, NGOs and businesses [participated](#) in the annual security seminar. The key subjects on the agenda included importance of cooperation on emerging technologies and need to secure silicon supply chains. The MSC provided an opportunity to take stock of cohesion of the Western alliance amidst the war in Ukraine and its political commitment of to the rules-based international order. Members also brainstormed on ways to ramp up the military industrial capabilities for producing more ammunition.