

South Asia Daily Briefing

By Kaswar Klasra

As of January 15, 2026, South Asia is navigating a period of intense strategic recalibration and volatility. The regional landscape is currently dominated by a "trinity of troubles" involving India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, where cross-border tensions have escalated into intermittent drone strikes and military skirmishes.

India's advisory for its citizens to leave Iran highlights the fragility of its western "connectivity corridor," as domestic unrest in Tehran threatens the viability of the Chabahar Port—New Delhi's vital link to Central Asia.

Simultaneously, Pakistan is pivoting toward economic diplomacy, leveraging its defense exports like the JF-17 Block III to stabilize its fragile economy while managing a deepening rift with the Taliban over the TTP.

Meanwhile, smaller nations like Bhutan and Sri Lanka are performing complex balancing acts, navigating the deepening influence of China against traditional Indian hegemony, signaling the emergence of a more multipolar and interconnected regional order.

Here are top six news articles shaping South Asia today

1. Pakistan's JF-17 Block III Garners Global Interest

Summary: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif informed the federal cabinet that multiple nations are actively negotiating to purchase JF-17 Thunder fighter jets. The surge in interest follows the aircraft's high performance in recent regional military engagements. **Link:** [The Express Tribune](#)

2. India Issues Urgent Exit Advisory for Nationals in Iran

Summary: Citing a deteriorating security situation and a massive crackdown on domestic protests, the Indian Embassy in Tehran has urged all Indian students, tourists, and professionals to leave the country immediately via available commercial transport. **Link:** [The Hindu](#)

3. Japan and Philippines Sign Landmark Defense Pact

Summary: In a move impacting Indo-Pacific security, Japan and the Philippines signed a Reciprocal Access Agreement in Manila. The pact facilitates joint military training and logistics, aimed at deterring maritime aggression and bolstering regional stability. **Link:** [Associated Press](#)

4. Sri Lanka Finalizes Debt Restructuring Deal with Germany

Summary: Sri Lanka signed a bilateral agreement with Germany to restructure €188 million in debt. This move, part of the Official Creditor Committee framework, provides critical

fiscal breathing room as Colombo continues its economic recovery efforts. **Link:** [EconomyNext](#)

5. India and China Reach Critical Trade Milestone

Summary: New Delhi and Beijing have concluded significant trade negotiations, providing much-needed certainty in existing markets. While border vigilance remains high, the deal aims to reduce non-tariff barriers and stabilize economic ties between the giants. **Link:** [Beef + Lamb NZ](#)

6. UNICEF Appeals for \$950 Million for Afghan Crisis

Summary: UNICEF has launched an urgent funding appeal to support 12 million Afghans facing "multidimensional crises." The agency warned that the combination of climate shocks, economic fragility, and restricted rights for women is reaching catastrophic levels. **Link:** [Afghanistan International](#)
