

South Asia Daily Briefing

Date January 26, 2026

South Asia's strategic landscape on January 26 reflected a complex mix of diplomacy, security anxieties, and shifting regional alignments. Chinese President Xi Jinping's Republic Day message to India, describing Beijing and New Delhi as "friends and partners," signaled a cautious diplomatic thaw amid broader geopolitical frictions. India simultaneously showcased expanding military capabilities during its Republic Day parade, highlighting modernization through advanced aircraft and missile systems. Yet heightened security fears persisted, with Indian authorities seizing massive quantities of explosives following intelligence alerts tied to cross-border militancy.

Economic pressures deepened along the Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier, where prolonged border closures hollowed out markets and disrupted regional trade flows, forcing Kabul to seek alternative routes via Iran and India. Diplomatically, India's hesitation to engage with President Trump's "Board of Peace" initiative underscored sensitivities surrounding Kashmir. Meanwhile, Washington reaffirmed strategic cooperation with New Delhi, reinforcing defense and Indo-Pacific partnerships.

Here are Top 5 News articles shaping South Asia Today:

1) Xi Jinping Congratulates India on Republic Day, Emphasises Partnership

40-word descr: On *January 26, 2026*, Chinese President Xi Jinping congratulated India on its 77th Republic Day and highlighted deepening China-India relations, calling the two nations "friends and partners," a notable diplomatic gesture amid broader regional tensions.

Link: <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-xi-says-india-china-are-friends-partners-2026-01-26/>

2) Afghan-Pakistan Border Trade Shutdown Empties Markets

40-word descr: Ongoing closure of major Pakistan-Afghanistan border crossings has crippled bilateral trade, left markets in Pakistani towns desolate, halted hundreds of daily freight trucks, and pushed Afghanistan to explore alternate trade routes via Iran and India.

Link: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2026/01/25/afghanistan-pakistan-border-closure/>

3) India Showcases Military Strength at 77th Republic Day Parade

40-word descr: India's *January 26 Republic Day* parade in New Delhi featured Rafale jets, hypersonic systems, Operation Sindoor tableau, and tri-service displays, underlining indigenous defense capabilities and strategic modernization.

Link: <https://m.economictimes.com/news/new-updates/republic-day-flying-rafales-hypersonic-missiles-operation-sindoor-tableau-what-the-2026-parade-will-convey-from-kartavya-path/articleshow/127518261.cms>

4) Intelligence Agencies Seize Explosives Ahead of Republic Day Amid Threat Alerts

40-word descr: Ahead of India's Republic Day, Rajasthan police seized thousands of kilograms of explosives and detonators amid nationwide terror alerts tied to suspected signals from Pakistan-based groups — highlighting cross-border security concerns.

Link: <https://m.economictimes.com/news/new-updates/republic-day-2026-thousands-of-kilograms-of-explosives-found-in-rajasthan-amid-26-26-intelligence-terror-alert/articleshow/127523069.cms>

5) India afraid peace board may try to 'resolve Kashmir'

DESPITE being invited to join the 'Board of Peace' by President Donald Trump, India has yet to formally get involved in the process. Conspicuous by its absence from the Davos ceremony where 20 world leaders — including Trump and Pakistan's PM Shehbaz Sharif — signed the board's charter, some in India are viewing New Delhi's reluctance through the lens of the Kashmir dispute.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1969084/india-afraid-peace-board-may-try-to-resolve-kashmir>

6) US Extends Republic Day Greetings, Highlights Strategic Cooperation with India

40-word descr: On *January 26*, the United States extended "historic" Republic Day greetings to India, underlining defense, energy, critical minerals, and Quad cooperation — signalling deepening Indo-US ties with strategic implications for the Indo-Pacific.

Link: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/a-historic-bond-us-extends-greetings-to-india-on-77th-republic-day/articleshow/127517871.cms>