

South Asia Daily Briefing

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Political and strategic fault lines across South Asia sharpened this week as India's newly announced trade deal with the United States sparked fierce domestic backlash. Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of surrendering national interests, underscoring growing unease over economic sovereignty even as New Delhi showed no sign of curbing Russian oil imports despite U.S. pressure.

Meanwhile, Pakistan quietly expanded its regional security footprint, with Islamabad and Baku pledging deeper naval cooperation and joint training—signaling Pakistan's broader push to diversify defense partnerships beyond traditional allies.

In Bangladesh, rare optimism accompanied the lead-up to parliamentary elections, with opposition figures suggesting voters may finally experience credible polls after years of disputed contests.

Elsewhere, Sri Lanka courted Saudi capital to revive its battered economy, while Russia flagged Afghanistan as a mounting security concern for the CSTO, reflecting persistent instability on Central Asia's southern flank.

Here are top five articles shaping South Asia Today

1-- India–US trade deal LIVE updates: No signal from India on halting oil purchases: Russia on Trump's claim

Description: India Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday reacted sharply to the India-US trade deal announced the previous night, accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of compromising India's interests.

"Narendra Modi ji has sold your hard work in this trade deal because he is compromised. He has sold the country," Gandhi said while speaking to reporters outside Parliament after walking out of the Lok Sabha. His remarks came after his speech was disrupted by BJP-led NDA members, forcing an adjournment of the House.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/business/news/india-us-trade-deal-live-updates-reciprocal-tariffs-cut-trump-pm-modi-russian-oil-latest-news/4129135/>

2-- Pakistan, Azerbaijan navies eye stronger defense ties, training cooperation

Description: Senior officials of the Azerbaijan Naval Forces (ANF) and Pakistan Navy on Tuesday pledged to strengthen bilateral defense ties and enhance cooperation through trainings, the Pakistan Navy said in a statement.

The discussions took place when ANF Commander Rear Admiral Shahin Mammadov called on Pakistan Navy chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf at the Naval Headquarters in Islamabad.

<https://www.arabnews.pk/node/2631586/pakistan>

3-- This election will be a challenging one: Dhaka-19 BNP candidate

BNP candidate for Dhaka-19 constituency Dr. Dewan Md. Salauddin Babu has said the upcoming 13th Jatiya Sangsad election will be a challenging one.

“After the last three or four elections, this is the first time voters are dreaming of being able to go to polling centers and cast their votes for their preferred candidates—something that was not a case before,” he said in an interview with BSS ahead of the national election.

<https://www.bssnews.net/national-parlament-election-2026/357381>

4-- Sri Lanka Delegation meets with Saudi Public Investment Fund Officials to explore Investment Opportunities

A Sri Lanka delegation headed by the Deputy Minister of Industry and Entrepreneurship Development Chathuranga Abeyasinghe, held a productive discussion with senior officials of the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF) at the PIF Headquarters.

During the meeting, Minister Abeyasinghe made a detailed presentation highlighting Sri Lanka’s competitive advantages and investment opportunities. The discussion also provided a platform to showcase the investment potential of Sri Lanka’s capital market. Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Sri Lanka, D.B.P.H. Dissabandara, and Chief Executive Officer of the Colombo Stock Exchange, Rajeeva Bandaranaike briefed the PIF officials on Sri Lanka’s new policies and regulatory reforms aimed at strengthening investor confidence and facilitating sustainable market growth.

5-- Afghanistan Among Top Security Issues For CSTO, Says Russian FM

Lavrov made the remarks Monday during a meeting in Moscow with Talatbek Masadykov, secretary-general of the CSTO. He said new security challenges and threats, particularly those emerging in Central Asia and Afghanistan, are at the top of the bloc’s agenda.

The Collective Security Treaty Organization is a regional military alliance whose members include Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Under its framework, an attack on one member is considered an attack on all.

<https://www.afintl.com/en/202602030357>

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