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Russia Sent First Free Grain Shipments To Africa

Russia sent the [first](#) of its promised free grain shipments to Africa on 17 November. State news agencies reported that two ships carrying 25,000 tonnes of grain had departed for Somalia and Burkina Faso. Earlier in July, President Vladimir Putin had pledged to send 2,00,000 tonnes of free grain to six African countries, including the Central African Republic, Eritrea, Mali and Zimbabwe. The promise came shortly after Moscow withdrew from an UN-brokered deal that ensured safe passage for Ukraine's agricultural exports from its southern Black Sea ports.

India-Russia Held Naval Exercises In Bay Of Bengal

India and Russia held a joint [naval exercise](#) in the Bay of Bengal on 21 November. The Russian Defence Ministry stated that 'the drills will help the two navies jointly counter global threats and ensure the safety of civilian shipping in the Asia-Pacific region'.

President Putin Said Russia Must Rival 'Dangerous' Western AI

President Vladimir Putin, on 24 November, [said](#) that the West has a "dangerous" monopoly over artificial intelligence and that Russia needed to rival "biased" Western chat-bots with its own technology. He stated, 'the monopolistic domination of foreign creations in Russia is unacceptable, dangerous and inadmissible,' urging Russia to be ahead of the curve. In April 2023, Russia's largest banking company, Sber, announced the launch of its own conversational artificial intelligence app "Gigachat" but in test mode only.

Russia Boosted Troop Numbers By 15%

Russian President Vladimir Putin [signed](#) a decree boosting troop numbers by 15 percent in a move the army said was due to "threats" associated with the war in Ukraine and the 'continuing expansion of NATO'. The number of serving army soldiers would increase by 1,70,000. The army added that it did not plan changes to conscription policy or start another mobilization drive. Instead, the army has, in recent months, turned to recruitment drives, promising attractive financial rewards especially in far-flung regions.

French President Emanuel Macron Visited Uzbekistan

On 2 November, President Emmanuel Macron [became](#) the first French President to visit Uzbekistan in thirty years. The main purpose of the visit was to strengthen business and cultural linkages. President Macron along with his Uzbek counterpart President Shavkat Mirziyoyev opened the French-Uzbek Business Forum. The two leaders also agreed to advance bilateral relations to the level of strategic partnership.

Russian President Vladimir Putin Visited Kazakhstan

On 9 November, Russian President Vladimir Putin [visited](#) Kazakhstan on an official visit. Various documents were signed including a joint [statement](#) dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty between Russia and Kazakhstan on Good-neighbourly Relations and Alliance in the 21st century. The visit focussed on strengthening the strategic partnership as well as prospects for working together within the Eurasian framework.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi Visited Tajikistan

On 8 November, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi [visited](#) Tajikistan to discuss bilateral ties. Several documents were signed including an agreement on visa-free visits between citizens of the two countries, who share a common language, as well as memorandums of understanding on transportation, free economic zones and joint efforts against illegal drug-trafficking. There were also discussions on the international and regional situation including Afghanistan and the Palestinian issue.

Armenia Launched “Crossroads of Peace” Project

On 18 November, the Armenian Government [released](#) a video highlighting a connectivity project connecting the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Black Sea, Caspian Sea and Mediterranean Sea via a consolidated regional railway network and the North-South and East-West roads. Armenia would establish five checkpoints on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border including in Kayan, Sotk, Karahunj, Angeghakot and Yeraskh. This has the potential to establish peace in the region apart from being the first step towards reopening of borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey.

PM Rishi Sunak Called PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his U.K. counterpart Rishi Sunak discussed the Israel-Hamas war and the situation in Palestine during a [phone call](#) on 3 November. They reiterated that Hamas did not represent the Palestinian people and

expressed deep concern at terrorism, worsening security situation and the loss of civilian lives. They agreed on the need for regional peace, security, stability and continued humanitarian assistance in the region. The two leaders also discussed the ongoing India-U.K. trade deal negotiations amidst the thirteenth round of talks. They reiterated their commitment towards the bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership, including trade, investment, emerging technology, defence, security and health.

Finland Closed Four Border Crossings

Finland, on 17 November, closed four border crossings with Russia to halt a surge in asylum seekers. The [Finnish border guards](#) said barriers would be put up at the Vaalimaa, Nuijamaa, Imatra and Niirala border posts in south-east Finland. These points have seen a surge in illegal crossings by citizens of countries including Syria, Yemen and Iraq. Helsinki accused Moscow of channelling migrants to the crossings in retaliation for it joining NATO. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Finland was making a "big mistake" and destroying bilateral relations.

Second Edition Of India Nordic Baltic Business Conclave

The second edition of the India Nordic Baltic Business Conclave was held on 22-23 November 2023 in New Delhi. The [Nordic-Baltic](#) (NB8) is a regional cooperation format that includes Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden. The NB8 is an innovation and technological powerhouse, while India, with its

increasingly strong focus on technology, offers immense partnership opportunities. This presents a unique chance for India to tap into the expertise and advancements of the Nordic-Baltic countries. In his address at the India Nordic Baltic Business Conclave, India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar stressed on the importance of the Baltic and Arctic seas for India.

MoU On Semiconductors Signed Between India And European Union

The European Union (EU) and India signed a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) on semiconductors](#) on 23 November 2023. This MOU has working arrangements on semiconductors ecosystem, its supply chain and innovation under the framework of the Trade Technology Council. It was agreed to add semiconductor ecosystem as one of the sectors for cooperation under the EU-India TTC Working Group on Strategic Technologies, Digital Governance and Digital Connectivity (WG1).