

# EURASIA DIGEST

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## **Roscosmos And NASA Agreed To Continue Joint ISS Flights Until 2025**

Russia's space agency Roscosmos has [agreed](#) to work with NASA to deliver crews to the International Space Station (ISS) until at least 2025 in order "to maintain the reliability of the ISS as a whole". The agreement also aims "to guarantee the presence of at least one representative of Roscosmos on the Russian segment and the presence of at least one representative of NASA on the American segment". The space sector - including its so-called cross-flights which involve sending crews from different nationalities on one spacecraft - is a rare remaining area of cooperation between Moscow and Washington.

## **Over 600 Gaza Refugees Housed In Russian Facilities**

The Head of Russia's Foreign Ministry's Situation and Crisis Center Department, Yuri Gorchakov, has [said](#) that over 600 people, including 300 children, evacuated from Gaza are being housed in 10 facilities across Russia. Gorchakov also said that Moscow has freed most of the Russian citizens who were taken hostage by Hamas.

## **Russia Redirected Most Oil Exports to China And India**

Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak has [said](#) that Russia redirected most of its oil exports from Europe to China and India amidst the ongoing European energy boycott. The share of Russia's oil exports to Europe has fallen from 40-45 per cent to 4-5 per cent while the exports to China and India have increased by 40-50 per cent. Novak said he expected Russian oil and gas revenues to amount to US\$ 98 billion in 2023 — a level similar to before the war began in February 2022. The oil and gas

industry accounts for 27 per cent of Russia's gross domestic product bringing in 57 per cent of Russia's export revenues. Novak said Russia was open to selling hydrocarbons to buyers in Latin America, Africa and the Asia-Pacific. Meanwhile, foreign shareholders have [suspended](#) their participation in Russia's Arctic LNG 2 project due to U.S. sanctions. These include France's Total Energie, China's state oil majors CNOOC and China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC), and Japan's consortium between Mitsui and Co and JOGMEC. The foreign companies each have a 10 per cent stake in Arctic LNG 2, with Novatek holding a 60 per cent stake.

## **Russia Warned Of 'Problems' With Finland After NATO Membership**

Russian President Vladimir Putin [has](#) warned of "problems" with Finland, which shares a 1,340 kms long border with Russia. He said that in response to Finland's NATO membership, Moscow will create a new military district in northwest Russia. The comments came as Finland shut its border with Russia, accusing it of orchestrating a migrant crisis at its border. Putin also said that Russia had no reason to be at war with NATO countries and that the U.S. was using a "rhetoric to justify a false policy on Russia".

## **Dr. S. Jaishankar Visited Russia**

During his five-day [visit](#) to Russia, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar hailed India-Russia relations as "very steady", "very strong" and "mutually beneficial", and said that he was "confident" that the annual India-Russia leadership summit would be held in 2024. He also called on President Vladimir Putin, apart from holding Inter-governmental Commission (IR-IGC) talks with Russian Deputy Trade

Minister Denis Manturov. The meetings yielded a number of agreements on trade, connectivity, nuclear energy, military technology and arms supplies.

### **Armenia-Azerbaijan Issued Joint Statement**

On 8 December, Armenia and Azerbaijan [issued](#) a rare joint statement that did not involve a third-party mediator. The two parties highlighted a historical chance to achieve long-term regional peace. They announced an exchange of prisoners of war. As a sign of goodwill, Armenia would also support Azerbaijan's bid to host COP 29. In return, Azerbaijan supported Armenia's candidature for Eastern European Group COP Bureau Membership.

### **UN Adopted Uzbekistan's Climate Resolution**

On 26 December, the United Nations [adopted](#) the resolution initiated by Uzbekistan called "Central Asia in the Face of Environmental Challenges: Strengthening Regional Solidarity for the Sake of Sustainable Development and Prosperity." It highlighted specific tasks to effectively counter climate and environmental threats in Central Asia. The resolution also suggested initiatives for environmental protection in Central Asia.

### **Tajikistan-Iran Economic Cooperation**

The Tajik-Iranian Joint Intergovernmental Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation [meeting](#) was held in Dushanbe on 26 December. During the meeting, the two sides agreed on expanding bilateral cooperation in trade, energy, transportation, modern technologies and tourism. An agreement was also signed for the launch of joint ventures in Tajikistan.

### **Kazakhstan Dropped Taliban From List Of Banned Organisations**

Kazakhstan has [removed](#) Taliban from its list of banned organisations. It has also emphasised that it would adhere strictly to the resolutions and decisions adopted by the UNSC and the UNGA on matters of international significance.

### **EU's Security And Defence Initiative In The Gulf Of Guinea**

On 11 December 2023, the European Council launched the EU security and defence initiative in the [Gulf of Guinea](#) for an initial duration of two years. This is expected to strengthen the capabilities of the armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin and support them in tackling instability and security challenges in the region. The initiative will combine military and civilian security and defence expertise, providing short-term training teams or visiting experts.

### **Russian Missile Reported In Polish Airspace**

Poland's armed forces chief said that a Russian missile entered [Poland](#) and then diverted towards the Ukrainian airspace on 29 December. Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, General Kukula Wiesław said that the missile travelled about 40 kms into the Polish airspace. Meanwhile, Polish Deputy Defence Minister Stanislaw Wziatek said, "we need to check whether this wasn't a provocation or a test of our reaction. We should check both scenarios carefully". Being a member of NATO, Polish and Allied aircraft were scrambled in response to the incident. This alert coincided with what Ukraine has called Russia's biggest day of air strikes since the inception of the war in 2022.