

# EURASIAN DIGEST

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## **Shavkat Mirziyoyev Re-elected Uzbekistan President**

The President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev has been [re-elected for a second term](#) following elections held on 24<sup>th</sup> October. The President elect, was a candidate from the Liberal Democratic Party and received 80.1% votes.

Maqsuda Varisova from the People's Democratic Party received 6.6% of the votes, Alisher Qodirov from the Milliy Tiklanish party - 5.5%, Narzulla Oblomurodov from the Ecological Party - 4.1% and Bakhrom Abdulkhalimov from the Adolat Social Democratic Party - 3.4%.

This year 80.4% Uzbeks turned up for voting. The favourable election results would further strengthen Mirziyoyev control over the various institutions in the country and cement him as the supreme leader of Uzbek people.

## **India's External Affairs Minister Visits Armenia**

Dr S. Jaishankar [visited Armenia](#) on 12-13 October as part of his visit to the Eurasian region. A roadmap for future course of cooperation was agreed upon. A lack of direct land and air connectivity between India and Armenia has hindered people-to-people contacts and economic-commercial exchanges.

There is a scope to strengthen economic and commercial cooperation, in particular tourism, hospitality, infrastructure and investment. Armenia could act as a new outlet for India's extended neighbourhood policy when it comes to the Eurasian region. Both India and Armenia are members of the International North South Transport Corridor, which has the potential to bridge connectivity barriers.

## **China to Build a Base in Gorno Badakhshan Region**

China is building a base for [Tajik special police unit](#) on the Afghan border in the Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO).

Speaking at a regular sitting of Tajikistan's lower chamber (Majlisi Namoyandagon) of parliament on 29<sup>th</sup> October, First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Abdurahmon Alamshozoda said that China's Ministry of Public Security would construct and outfit the facility for Tajikistan's special rapid deployment police unit. According to Alamshozoda, the facility will be located in Wakhan Valley's Ishkashim district. 55 million yuans (8.6 million USD) are expected to be spent on construction and outfitting the facility before handing it over to Tajikistan's special police unit.

China would be aiming to expand footprints in Tajikistan from just being an economic influencer.

## **Kyrgyzstan to Purchase Military Equipment from Russia and Turkey**

Chairman of the State Committee for National Security, Kamchybek Tashiev said that 300 million soms were allocated for purchasing 40 units of armored [military equipment](#) for the State Border Service. There are plans to set aside a part of the defence budget for Russian and Turkish drones.

Earlier the nation accepted military equipment in the form of assistance, but now they are buying it from UAE, Russia and Turkey. The military is also undergoing training in Turkey. The current turmoil in Afghanistan has prompted Kyrgyzstan to focus on its defence equipment and military training.

### **First Indian- Kyrgyz Strategic Dialogue**

On 28<sup>th</sup> October, Lieutenant General Marat Imankulov, Secretary of the Security Council of Kyrgyzstan visited India for the first bilateral [Strategic Dialogue](#). He also met with the National Security Advisor Mr. Ajit Doval.

Discussions regarding the security environment were held, with both the parties agreeing on common security threats and challenges. The meeting also covered bilateral cooperation in the fields of narcotics, combating radicalization, counter-terrorism and defence cooperation.

Imankulov is the first Kyrgyz official to visit India, post the Afghanistan crisis. The meet opens up a window of opportunity for India's role in the Central Asian region.

### **Visit of Indian External Affairs Minister to Central Asia**

External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar visited Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan from 11-12 October, to attend the [6<sup>th</sup> CICA meeting](#). His visit began with a meeting with the Uzbek Foreign Minister, where the recent developments in Afghanistan were discussed. He also met with the Turkmenistan Foreign Minister and tweeted "Good to meet FM Rashid Meredov of Turkmenistan. Discussed our bilateral and regional cooperation. Exchanged views on neighborhood developments. Agreed to remain in close touch."

In Kyrgyzstan, Jaishankar met with President Sadyr Japarov and tweeted, "...Appreciate his strong commitment to advance our Strategic Partnership. Discussed expanding our economic and development partnership and people to people contacts." "Cordial and constructive

talks with FM Ruslan Kazakbaev of Kyrgyz Republic. Agreed on USD 200 million LoC to support development projects. Also concluded an understanding on executing high impact community projects."

The increased visits to Central Asia reflect the importance that India attaches to the region as a whole, especially during crisis.

### **Russia-Taliban Talks**

Russia [hosted the Taliban for talks](#) in Moscow on 20 October 2021. The talks, which witnessed participation of officials from 10 countries are one of the Taliban's most prominent international meetings since taking over Afghanistan in mid-August. The Taliban delegation was headed by Abdul Salam Hanafi. Russian Foreign Ministry stated that the goal of the meeting was to consolidate the efforts of the international community to prevent a humanitarian crisis. It also delved into the [Taliban's "efforts to stabilise the military and political situation"](#) and set up work of the state apparatus". President Putin too had cautioned in the past against the presence of more than two thousand Islamic State (IS) militants converging in northern Afghanistan with the aim of crossing over into Central Asia as refugees.

### **4th Russia-ASEAN Summit Held**

The 4<sup>th</sup> [Russia-ASEAN summit](#) meeting took place (in virtual form) on 28 October 2021. The meeting was timed to coincide with the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of relations between Russia and ASEAN. The leaders summed up the results of long-term cooperation, considered ways to expand political, economic, security and humanitarian interaction, and exchanged views on the situation in the Asia-Pacific region. President Putin emphasized that strengthening ties with ASEAN "has

always been and remains one of Russia's foreign policy priorities". A [joint statement](#) comprising a Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) for the period 2021-25 was issued at the conclusion of the meeting.

### **Russia's Call to Prevent NATO Presence in Central Asia**

The Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called on the [neighbouring countries](#) of Afghanistan to prevent the military presence of the U.S. and NATO forces on their territory. This was announced by Lavrov in a video message to the participants in the ministerial meeting of the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan (Iran, China, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) on 27<sup>th</sup> of October.

"Once again, we call on the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan to prevent the military presence of the U.S. and NATO forces on their territory, which are planning to move there after leaving Afghan soil," he said.

Russia is playing a cautious role and wants to prevent any American presence to impact its security influence in the region.

### **Turkmenistan Foreign Minister visits Kabul**

Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister, Rashid Meredov arrived with a [delegation](#) in Kabul on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2021 for talks with officials of the Islamic Emirate.

According to Karimi, Turkmenistan officials will hold talks with Prime Minister Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund and a number of other high level officials on important issues, including the Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India (TAPI) gas pipeline. The head of the TAPI project was also in the Turkmenistan delegation.

This meeting shows how Turkmenistan has maintained neutrality in its foreign policy even when it comes to working with the Taliban.