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CAPS MONITORING

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INTRODUCTORY WORDS BY THE DIRECTOR

Dear readers,

The third issue of our regular monthly monitoring of geopolitical and economic developments in Asia has just been published.

And as always, it serves as your ultimate guide to the economically most dynamic and nimble region of the world.

The past weeks have underscored just how rapidly Asia's geopolitical and economic landscape is evolving and how profoundly these shifts ripple outward to shape European and Czech strategic interests.

The Indo-Pacific and its neighbouring regions are entering a new phase defined by heightened competition among major powers (U.S. and China), increasingly assertive regional actors (India, Japan, Kazakhstan), and accelerating technological and economic transformations (Uzbekistan).

This month's monitoring captures these dynamics, beginning with the European Union's most substantial economic engagement to date in Central Asia. The nearly €100 million package agreed in Tashkent marks a turning point, moving Europe from long-term strategic declarations to tangible projects aimed at securing critical minerals, modernising transit routes, and supporting environmental recovery in the Aral Sea basin. It reflects a broader European recognition that resilience (economic, technological, and geopolitical) cannot be achieved without deeper Eurasian connectivity. The U.S., meanwhile, has reinserted itself into Central Asian diplomacy with the C5+1 summit hosted by President Trump highlighted Washington's renewed interest in uranium, energy corridors, and diversified supply chains.

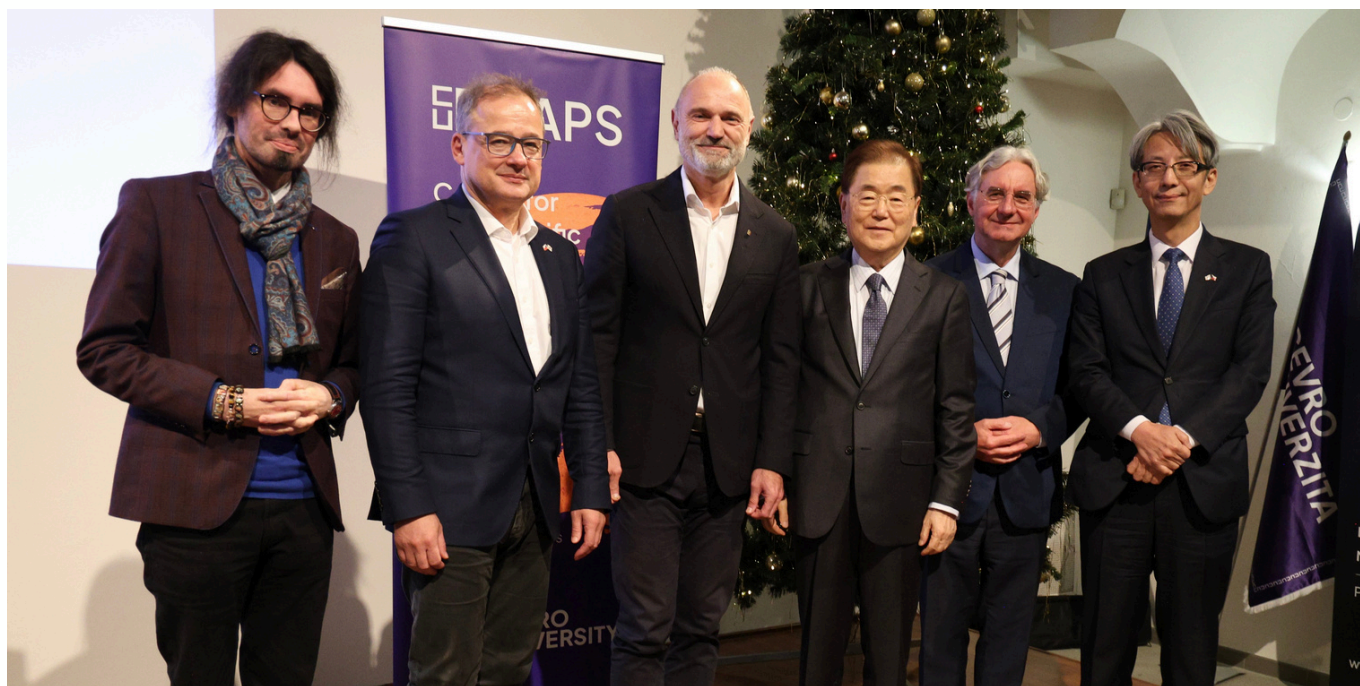


Kazakhstan's subsequent visit to Moscow, however, demonstrated the persistent reality of Russian leverage in the region and the fine diplomatic line regional states must walk as they manage competing expectations from global powers. In the Indo-Pacific's core security theatres, South Korea's intensifying nuclear debate, the discussions on the possible reinterpretation of USFK's strategic role, Japan's diplomatic tensions with China, and Taiwan's growing macroeconomic imbalances underscore how deeply the region's stability is being reshaped by external pressure and internal constraints. Japan's vast stimulus package and South Korea's AI-focused budget reveal the scale at which regional economies are investing in technological competitiveness, competing for a leading role in the ongoing 4th industrial revolution.

Overall, the developments captured in this monitoring demonstrate that Asia is not merely reacting to global change, but it is increasingly driving it. For Europe and for Czechia, understanding these shifts is essential for anticipating risks, identifying opportunities, and crafting informed policies in a world where geopolitical and economic processes are more interlinked than ever. That is why CAPS has been established at CEVRO University, entering its 4th month of existence. However, our activities go much further behind the publication of materials, we also focus and facilitating the view of key Asian policy-makers and statesmen to the Czech public. As part of this mission, we had the honor to welcome Mr. Chung Eui-yong, former minister of foreign affairs and a national security advisor of the Republic of Korea, to our premises. You can find more about his insightful lecture in a short report at the end of this issue.

Jan Železný, Ph.D.

Executive Director of the Center for Asia-Pacific Studies (CAPS), CEVRO University



CENTRAL ASIA

EU Solidifies Central Asia Pivot with €100m Deal Package in Tashkent

The European Union solidified its strategic pivot toward Central Asia in Tashkent (Uzbekistan), signing nearly €100 million in new agreements at the 3rd EU-Central Asia Economic Forum.

Held on November 26, 2025, the summit marked a decisive shift from diplomatic dialogue to concrete economic implementation, driven by Europe's urgent need to secure critical resources and operationalize trade routes that bypass Russian territory. Led by EU Commissioners Jozef Sikela and Marta Kos, the forum underscored a mutual desire to move towards a sophisticated partnership.

Central to these discussions was the operationalization of the "Middle Corridor," a multimodal transport route connecting China to Europe via the Caspian Sea. The forum launched "DATA4CRM," a €7.5 million initiative to digitize geological data, effectively creating a modern map for investors to locate the critical minerals essential for Europe's green transition.

Beyond trade and industry, the agreements placed a heavy emphasis on environmental and regional stability. A major €48.8 million package was committed to the "Aral Sea Project," bringing together the EU, the European Investment Bank, and French development agencies to fund land restoration in the ecologically devastated region.

Additionally, to ensure that increased trade flows are not exploited for illicit activities, the partners renewed key border management and anti-drug programs worth a combined €30 million. Ultimately, these deals signal that the EU-Central Asia relationship has graduated to a functional economic alliance, providing the region with alternatives to its traditional dependency on Russia.

The C5+1 Summit + Russia-Kazakhstan Cooperation Signed

On 6 November 2025, President Donald Trump hosted the leaders of the five Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) at the White House under the C5+1 format. The meeting was focused primarily on critical minerals, energy cooperation and supply chain diversification.

Trump described Central Asia as an extremely wealthy region and emphasised the need to broaden U.S. access to strategic minerals through new agreements and partnerships. For Kazakhstan, as the region's largest economy and the world's leading uranium producer, the summit served as a platform to explore deeper economic engagement with Washington. The meeting was presented as a reset in U.S.–Central Asia relations, with Kazakhstan's President Tokayev calling it “the beginning of a new era of partnership.”

Just five days after participating in the C5+1 summit in Washington, President Tokayev travelled to Moscow to meet with Vladimir Putin. The agenda was described by the Kremlin as wide-ranging, with strong emphasis on gas cooperation and the economic consequences of recent U.S. sanctions on Russian energy firms. Both Lukoil and Rosneft, sanctioned by the Trump administration in October, hold significant stakes in Kazakhstan's major energy fields. As most of Kazakh oil is exported via Russian infrastructure, these sanctions indirectly affect Astana's strategic position, making the continued energy cooperation with Moscow difficult to avoid.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov noted that Putin would be interested in Tokayev's report from Washington. Which indicates that Moscow is trying to watch closely any potential shifts in regional alignments. Kazakhstan therefore continues to walk a diplomatic tightrope, maintaining ties with Russia while also seeking diversified partnerships with the U.S., China, Japan and the EU as part of its multivector foreign policy.

Creation of a Tax-Free Zone for AI and Digital Infrastructure in Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan has announced the establishment of a special tax-free zone that is dedicated to data centre projects and artificial intelligence in the autonomous western region of Karakalpakstan. According to the government, foreign investors that are willing to invest at least USD 100 million will receive full exemptions from taxes and duties until 2040.

Even though the political environment remains highly centralised, this step is part of the country's broader strategy to position itself as a regional investment hub. The government did not specify when construction would start, nor did it reveal any potential investors.

Karakalpakstan was likely chosen due to a combination of political, strategic and economic motives. As one of Uzbekistan's poorest regions, heavily affected by the ecological collapse of the Aral Sea caused by Soviet era irrigation schemes, it represents both a development challenge and a strategic opportunity.

Uzbekistan, according to official plans, aims to attract over USD 1 billion in foreign investment into AI and digital infrastructure by 2030.

Japarov Secures Unrestrained Mandate as Electorate Disengages

The completion of Kyrgyzstan's political restructuring was formalized as preliminary results from the November snap parliamentary elections confirmed a sweeping victory for allies of President Sadyr Japarov. The administration secured a supermajority by introducing a new voting system that favors local powerbrokers over established parties.

Critics argued this move has effectively stripped the parliament of its status as a place for a balanced political debate and secured a vertically integrated power structure ahead of the 2027 presidential elections, claims that Japarov's circles denied.

Despite the overwhelming victory, the election also revealed a disconnect between the state and its citizens, underscored by a historic low turnout of 36.9 %. While the election maintained diversity through technical gender quotas and saw victories for influential figures like Shairbek Tashiyev, the result ultimately leaves President Japarov with an unrestrained political mandate.



SOUTHEAST ASIA

Collapse of the fragile Kuala Lumpur Peace Accord

The US-brokered truce between Thailand and Cambodia, signed only weeks ago at the ASEAN Summit, unraveled on 10th of November following a landmine explosion that severely injured a Thai soldier. The "Kuala Lumpur Peace Accord" was established in October 2025 to end the region's deadliest border clashes in a decade. The conflict erupted in July 2025 over the disputed Preah Vihear temple area, which had left 48 dead and displaced 300,000 civilians. President Trump had forced the agreement by threatening both nations with severe trade tariffs, a move driven by his desire to secure a rapid diplomatic victory. However, Thailand has now indefinitely suspended the pact after accusing Cambodia of planting new landmines in violation of the terms. Analysts attribute the swift collapse to the deal being a performative arrangement driven by external American economic pressure, which failed to address the root cause of the conflict – the lack of mutually agreed border demarcation.

ASEAN Leadership Handover

At the closing of the 47th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia officially transferred the rotating ASEAN Chairmanship to the Philippines. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim handed the ceremonial gavel to Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., concluding Malaysia's 2025 term which focused on economic integration and digital resilience. The Philippines will lead the association throughout 2026, assuming the chairmanship ahead of the standard schedule due to the prior decision to bypass Myanmar due to country's political situation



Cambodia and U.S. Relations: Strategic Rebalancing

The United States lifted its defense trade embargo on Cambodia on 6 November 2025, marking a notable shift in bilateral relations. The embargo was imposed by the Biden administration in 2021 because of concerns regarding China's growing military influence, alleged human rights violations and corruption.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio justified the decision by citing Cambodia's renewed pursuit of peace and security, particularly through re-engagement with the U.S. in defense cooperation and transnational crime prevention. Arms exports will now be approved on a case-by-case basis. This change followed a U.S. brokered ceasefire agreement between Cambodia and Thailand, that was supervised by President Donald Trump.

However, American concerns over China's military footprint remain unresolved. U.S. officials have repeatedly raised alarms about Beijing's expansion of the Ream Naval Base, which could provide China with another strategic access point in the South China Sea.

It seems that the U.S. administration seeks a reset with Cambodia when it senses that they drifted too close to Beijing. This recent decision therefore appears to be a case of strategic hedging: Cambodia signals limited openness to the U.S. while also avoiding worsening of relations with China, its close partner. The aim is likely to gain bargaining power between both actors – yet without resolution over the Ream Naval Base, the realignment may remain superficial.



SOUTH ASIA

India Deepens Ties with Taliban to Secure Strategic Chabahar Port

India solidified its pragmatic approach to the Taliban administration on November 20, 2025, as Indian Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar hosted Afghan Minister of Industry and Commerce Nooruddin Azizi. The high-level dialogue marked a deepening of New Delhi's "functional engagement" policy, distinct from diplomatic recognition, aimed at securing vital strategic interests in a volatile region.

With Kabul-Islamabad relations at all-time low, the talks centered on operationalizing the Chabahar Port in Iran as a reliable lifeline for Afghan trade, bypassing Pakistan's land borders and economic blockade.

Azizi pressed for enhanced visa facilitation for Afghan traders and invited Indian investment in the mining and energy sectors, positioning Afghanistan as a resource-rich partner despite security challenges.

For New Delhi, the meeting reaffirms a long-term strategy: maintaining influence in Kabul to ensure regional security while building a trade corridor that connects to Central Asia without reliance on Pakistan.

US-India Tech and Trade Dialogue

In Washington, India's Ambassador to the United States, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, met with U.S. Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Jacob Helberg to discuss the evolving bilateral economic agenda. The talks focused on three core pillars of cooperation including strategic trade dialogue, mutually beneficial trade deals and technology cooperation including AI and innovation sectors.

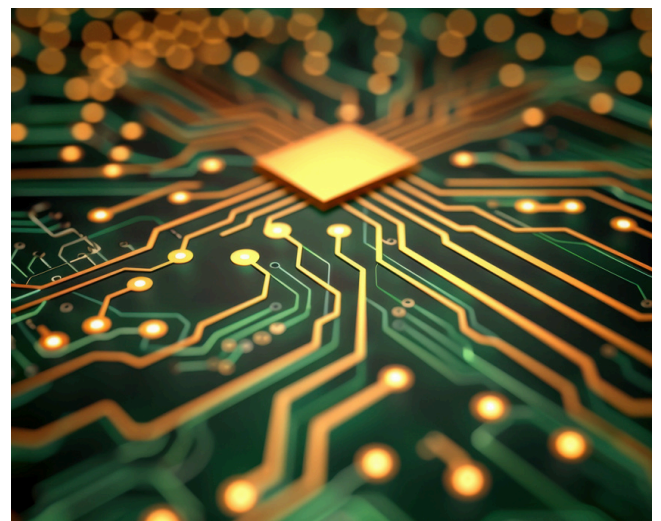
Kwatra's meeting with Helberg is a part of a broader pattern of high-level engagements between Indian officials and U.S. lawmakers. This expanding diplomatic outreach has been complemented by ongoing virtual trade negotiations between New Delhi and Washington.

Both countries, according to Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agarwal, now meet on a regular basis and appear close to finalising the first phase of bilateral trade agreement by the end of the year. Most technical issues have already been resolved.

Two parallel negotiations are currently underway. One concerning the broader BTA framework, and another that is aimed at addressing reciprocal tariffs imposed by the Trump administration, including levies on oil imports. Agarwal emphasised that the removal of these tariffs could significantly benefit Indian exports.

Both sides have expressed confidence that a fair and equitable agreement could be reached by late 2025 despite remaining disagreements, including U.S. calls for lower tariffs on industrial goods, genetically modified crops and electric vehicles. This suggests that the broader U.S. – India partnership is increasingly shaped by techno-economic cooperation.

Their trade policy is tightly linked to strategic priorities including energy security and reduced dependence on China.



EAST ASIA

USFK Mission Reframed Eastward

The introduction of an "east-up" map by U.S. Forces Korea commander Gen. Xavier Brunson has sparked debate over expanding USFK's mission beyond Korean Peninsula deterrence, reframing South Korea as a "decisive space inside the defensive perimeter" at the center of an Indo-Pacific axis linking the United States, China, Russia, and North Korea, rather than a peripheral outpost. Experts view this as aligning with Washington's strategic flexibility concept—allowing USFK to respond to regional threats—and reflecting an emerging security triangle connecting the Philippines, Japan, and South Korea, while reinforcing rather than diluting North Korea deterrence.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has affirmed that USFK must retain flexibility to address threats across the region, and analysts note South Korea's geographic position offers leverage over China's Northern Theater Command and Russia's Pacific assets. South Korean officials, however, remain cautious, emphasizing that direct confrontation scenarios with China or Russia are unrealistic and that the map should be interpreted only as the U.S. describes it. While the map does not immediately alter USFK's mission, experts agree it reflects a broader strategic trend: as Indo-Pacific security architecture becomes increasingly interconnected, the peninsula's strategic importance is expected to grow, effectively placing South Korea at the center of the strategic chessboard rather than on its edge.

Nuclear Deterrence Debate Intensifies

South Korea is experiencing a mainstream national debate over nuclear weapons acquisition, driven by North Korea's expanding nuclear arsenal and declining confidence in U.S. extended deterrence amid American political polarization. While Seoul's conventional Three-Axis System provides strong deterrence components, it cannot fully solve the nuclear imbalance, and South Korea possesses the technological capability to develop nuclear weapons relatively quickly. However, some warn the nuclear option remains a losing bet: it would fracture the U.S. alliance, trigger severe economic sanctions and investor flight, likely provoke Chinese retaliation, and could spark a regional nuclear arms race involving Japan and Taiwan without addressing Seoul's vulnerability to North Korea's conventional and chemical-biological forces. The other discussed path involves strengthening the U.S.-ROK alliance through more integrated planning, enhanced intelligence and cyber capabilities, clearer extended-deterrence commitments, and stronger societal resilience, while maintaining technological flexibility short of weaponization. All backed by credible conventional deterrence and smart hedging.

South Korea's Export Boom Even Before Lower U.S. Tariffs Take Effect

South Korea's export performance surged in November 2025, rising 8.4% year-on-year to \$61.04 billion and beating market expectations, driven by record semiconductor exports of \$17.26 billion (up 38.5%) and auto exports jumping 13.7% after a U.S. trade deal cleared tariff uncertainty. However, this robust growth occurred under a 25% U.S. tariff regime that had already depressed shipments to America by 0.2% due to impacts on steel, machinery, and auto parts.

The trade landscape is set to shift dramatically following U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick's December 1 confirmation that tariffs will drop to 15% retroactive to November 1, contingent on South Korea implementing its \$350 billion strategic investment commitments in the U.S. This agreement also removes airplane parts tariffs and caps future national security tariffs on semiconductors and pharmaceuticals at 15%, potentially boosting future exports to the U.S. even as the current surge reflects pre-reduction dynamics.

Korea Unveils AI Era

President Lee Jae Myung unveiled a 728 trillion won (\$506 billion) budget for 2026 on November 4, calling it "Korea's first budget to open the AI era" and allocating 10.1 trillion won (triple this year's amount) to artificial intelligence, including 2.6 trillion won for AI integration across industrial, daily, and public sectors and 7.5 trillion won for talent development and infrastructure.

The government will purchase an additional 15,000 high-performance GPUs to secure 35,000 units, while Nvidia is set to supply 260,000 processors to Korea, ensuring private companies face no procurement difficulties.

Defense spending will rise 8.2% to 66.3 trillion won, with Lee vowing to cultivate the defense sector into a leading manufacturing industry and make South Korea one of the world's top four defense exporters through R&D investment and startup support. The budget also expands welfare measures, raising the median income standard by a record 6.51% to guarantee at least 2 million won in monthly basic living support for a four-member household, extending child allowances to age 8, and expanding senior employment programs from 1.1 million to 1.15 million jobs.

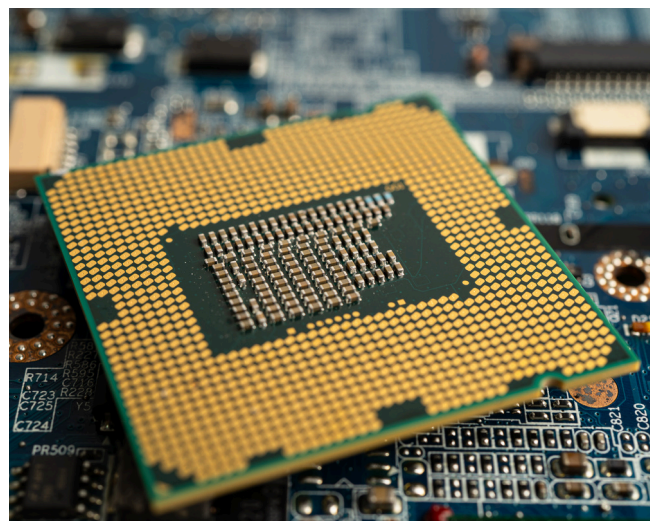
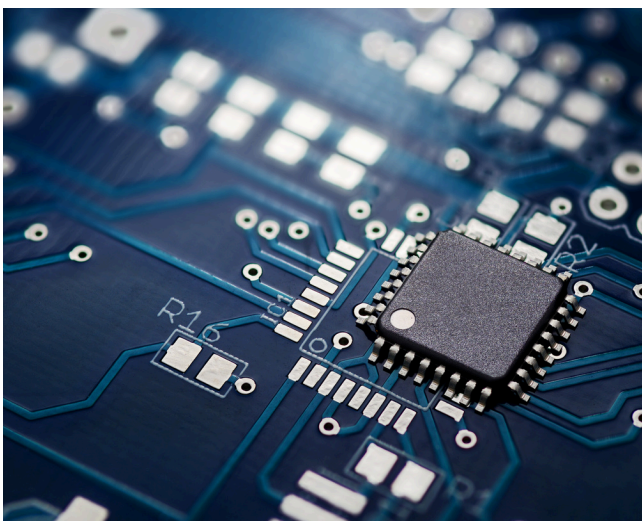
Lee's address, boycotted by the opposition People Power Party, also summarized APEC outcomes, including concluded tariff negotiations with the U.S. and progress on Seoul's bid to build nuclear-powered submarines.

Surging demand for Taiwanese chips

Taiwan's export-driven success, powered by a 300% surge in chip and server exports over five years, has produced record imbalances: in October its monthly goods-trade surplus hit 22.6 billion dollars (about 31% of GDP annualised) and the current-account surplus has reached 16% of GDP, while the Economist's Big Mac index suggests the Taiwan dollar is around 55% undervalued.

For decades the central bank (CBC) has systematically leaned against currency appreciation by accumulating foreign-exchange reserves (from 90 billion dollars, or 32% of GDP, in 1998 to 600 billion dollars, or 72% of GDP, today), keeping exports competitive but inflating a savings glut (national savings at 39% of GDP), depressing consumption (down to 45% of GDP) and driving house prices to more than four times their 1998 level, with a price-to-income ratio of 16 in Taipei.

To channel excess foreign earnings without provoking U.S. accusations of manipulation, the CBC has increasingly relied on life insurers, who now hold roughly 700 billion dollars of mostly U.S. assets backing 960 billion dollars in Taiwan-dollar promises, leaving an estimated 200-billion-dollar unhedged currency risk that could render them insolvent if the Taiwan dollar rose sharply. Politically, powerful exporters, cheap credit and large CBC profit transfers to the government all entrench the status quo, and the central bank has long exercised outsized influence and resisted criticism; yet rising external pressure (especially from U.S. trade negotiators) and mounting financial vulnerabilities mean that Taiwan's strategy of suppressing its currency to sustain export competitiveness is looking increasingly difficult to maintain without a painful adjustment.



Japan Approves Huge Stimulus

Japan's cabinet approved a 21.3 trillion yen (\$135.5 billion) stimulus package (the largest since the Covid-19 pandemic) focused on addressing rising prices, achieving a strong economy, and strengthening defense and diplomatic capabilities, including a 10-year shipbuilding fund and raising defense spending to 2% of GDP by FY 2027.

The package will provide electricity and gas subsidies worth about 7,000 yen per household over three months starting in January, eliminate gasoline taxes, and will be funded through government revenue and bond issuance (though less than last year's 42.1 trillion yen).

The announcement comes as Japan faces persistent inflation above the Bank of Japan's 2% target for 43 consecutive months (headline at 3%), weakening economic growth with Q3 GDP contracting 0.4% quarter-on-quarter, and 10-year government bond yields at their highest since 2008 (around 1.8%).

While October exports rose 3.6% year-on-year, beating expectations, experts criticize the package as a short-term measure rather than structural reform, warning that demand-side stimulus does not address fundamental inflation pressures or supply-side constraints.



CHINA

China Manufacturing Still Contracting

China's manufacturing activity edged higher in November but remained in contraction for the eighth consecutive month, with the official manufacturing PMI rising to 49.2 and the non-manufacturing index falling to 49.5 as the boost from Golden Week holiday spending faded. Supply and demand in manufacturing improved modestly: the production index reached 50, new orders climbed to 49.2, high-tech manufacturing stayed in expansion at 50.1, and the PMI for small enterprises jumped to 49.1, even as large manufacturers softened to 49.3.

Services weakened overall despite strength in sectors such as rail transport, telecommunications, broadcasting, satellite transmission, and finance (all above 55), while real estate and residential services remained below 50 and construction activity improved slightly to 49.6 amid stronger short-term growth expectations. Employment and delivery metrics showed marginal improvement, manufacturing employment rose to 48.4, non-manufacturing to 45.3, and supplier delivery times reached 50.1, but new orders in non-manufacturing slipped to 45.7 and input prices ticked up. The PMI data underscore an economy still constrained by U.S. tariff pressures, a drawn-out property slump, and soft domestic demand, even as policymakers rely on targeted measures and a recent U.S.–China trade truce to keep growth broadly on track toward the 5 percent annual target without launching large-scale new stimulus.

China on COP30

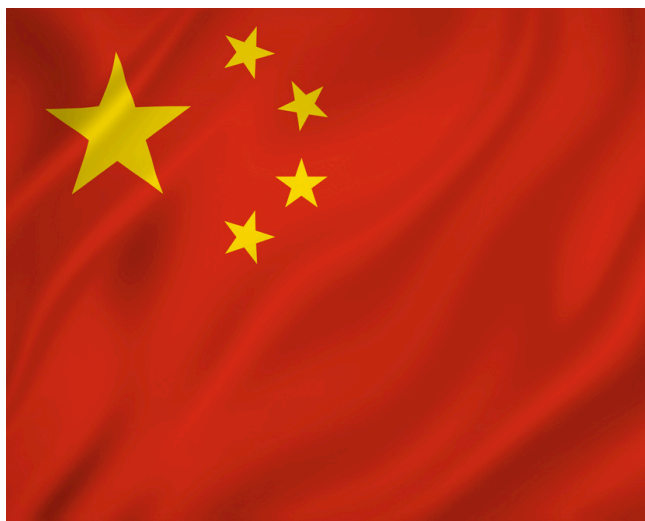
With the United States absent from COP30 for the first time in three decades after President Trump withdrew from the Paris Agreement, China has assumed a more central role at the climate summit in Belém, Brazil, dominating the entrance hall with its country pavilion and hosting presentations by major clean energy companies including CATL, State Grid, solar giants Trina and Longi, and BYD, which introduced plug-in hybrid vehicles for summit use. China's transformation from a modest presence to a prominent player reflects its dominance in renewable energy and electric vehicles, with executives emphasizing multilateral cooperation and building a "clean, beautiful world," while diplomats work behind the scenes to fill the void left by Washington, helping reach agreement on the COP30 agenda and acting as a guarantor of the climate regime. While California Governor Newsom warned that America risks being "toast competitively" if it doesn't recognize China's manufacturing dominance, some observers argue China could show stronger leadership by adopting more ambitious emission reduction targets beyond its September pledge of 7–10% cuts by 2035.

China's increased engagement demonstrates its strategic interest in ensuring COP30's success and consolidating its leadership among Global South nations, using its technological scale to make climate pledges achievable while positioning itself as the primary counterweight to U.S. climate skepticism.

China–Japan Tension

Japan and China have escalated tensions following Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's statement on November 7 that a Chinese military attack on Taiwan "could constitute a survival-threatening situation" for Japan, potentially triggering activation of Japan's Self-Defense Forces under its 2015 security law. Chinese Consul-General in Osaka Xue Jian responded with a controversial post stating that "the dirty head that sticks itself in must be cut off," which Japan condemned as "highly inappropriate," prompting mutual diplomatic protests and summoning of ambassadors. The row has intensified beyond rhetoric: China urged its citizens to avoid traveling to Japan, affecting tourism and retail stocks; postponed releases of Japanese films; and warned that Japan defending Taiwan would constitute "aggression" and "interference in China's internal affairs." Takaichi's hawkish stance—representing a departure from Japan's traditional "strategic ambiguity" on Taiwan and reflecting her role as a protégé of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, has touched on deep historical grievances and longstanding territorial disputes.

While the tension remains a diplomatic crisis rather than a military one, experts warn that escalation risks triggering regional conflict with global consequences, particularly if events accelerate beyond either side's control; U.S. President Donald Trump has reportedly urged Takaichi to avoid further escalation. The underlying dynamic reflects Japan's increasing security autonomy amid U.S. uncertainty, China's sensitivity over Taiwan sovereignty, and the fragility of economic ties (two-way trade exceeds \$300 billion annually) when nationalism and historical memory dominate diplomatic calculations.



AUSTRALIA AND OCEANIA

Australia and Indonesia treaty

As we mentioned in our previous monitoring, Australia is trying to deepen its security and defence ties with countries in the region. This month Australia and Indonesia agreed on a new security treaty during Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto's visit to Sydney on 12 November 2025, committing both nations to consult each other at leader and ministerial levels if either country's security is threatened and to consider individual or joint measures to address those threats. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese described the agreement as a major extension of previous security deals that recognises acting together as the best way to secure regional peace and stability, while Prabowo emphasized the determination to maintain the best relationships to enhance and guarantee security for both countries.

The treaty, expected to be signed in 2026 and modeled on a 1995 agreement that was withdrawn in 1999 after Australia's East Timor intervention, builds on warming security ties under Albanese's centre-left Labor government and follows Australia's recent mutual defence treaty with Papua New Guinea. Unlike the PNG pact, the Indonesia agreement does not commit to collective action against common danger, focusing instead on political symbolism and allowing Prabowo to demonstrate "classic balancing behaviour" by keeping Australia satisfied while Indonesia maintains its non-aligned foreign policy and relationships with Russia and China.

Chinese visit to Australia

Zhao Leji, the Chinese political leader who visited Canberra, oversaw a law last year that expanded corporate confidentiality requirements and introduced travel restrictions on workers in sensitive industries, increasing operational risks for foreign companies in China. During his recent visit to Brisbane and Canberra on a Chinese-government jet, Zhao met with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese without facing journalists' questions, reflecting Canberra's efforts to improve bilateral relations following Beijing's lifting of trade sanctions. Before his current role as parliament chairman, Zhao headed the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the anti-corruption agency that has disciplined over 5.7 million party members and convicted nearly 470,000 since 2013. His visit drew silent protests from Falun Gong members and prompted security advisories for Parliament House staff to protect electronic devices. While Albanese's outreach reflects Australia's interest in stabilizing ties with its largest trading partner, Zhao's role in expanding laws that complicate foreign business operations and his background in China's extensive anti-corruption campaign present complex considerations for the bilateral relationship.

ASIA IN CZECHIA

Czech Senate President Reinforces Strategic Partnership with Vietnam

Czech Senate President Miloš Vystrčil led a delegation to Vietnam to operationalize the "Strategic Partnership" ahead of the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations, holding high-level talks with President Luong Cuong and General Secretary To Lam. The mission focused on key economic deliverables, specifically advocating for the ratification of the EU-Vietnam Investment Protection Agreement (EVIPA), support for Škoda Auto's expansion, and the establishment of direct Prague-Hanoi flights.

A central theme of the visit was the "human dimension" of the relationship. Vystrčil met with representatives of the Vietnamese diaspora, officially recognized as a national minority in Czechia since 2013, praising them as a vital bridge for successful integration and mutual respect. He emphasized that the bond extends beyond politics, noting that nearly 300,000 Vietnamese understand the Czech language due to past work or study, making the community an integral part of Czech society. The delegation also delivered a 3 million CZK humanitarian aid package to help victims of recent floods.

Czech and Taiwanese firms joined to develop satellites

Czech firms Stellar Exploration and Spacemanic and Taiwan's Tensor Tech signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 19 November 2025 at the Czech Space Pavilion during Space Tech Expo Europe in Bremen to jointly develop sustainable CubeSat and SmallSat platforms.

Under the partnership, Stellar Exploration will act as Mission & Payload Prime, providing propulsion, power systems, and advanced payloads such as GNSS Radio Occultation, GNSS spoofing and interference detection, SAR, and RF/SIGINT sensors, while Spacemanic will lead platform development, integration, and launch coordination, and Tensor Tech will supply Attitude Determination and Control Systems and precision sensors.

The collaboration focuses on regulation-compliant nano- and small satellites that meet EU Space Act, ESA Zero Debris Charter, and global deorbit standards, and aims to support institutional and commercial missions within ESA, EU Horizon Europe, and Taiwanese space programs, strengthening Czech-Taiwan industrial ties in the space sector.

PERSON OF THE MONTH

Chung Eui-yong

Chung Eui-yong (born 1946) is a prominent South Korean diplomat, security strategist, and public servant who played a central role in shaping the Republic of Korea's foreign and security policy during a period of historic engagement on the Korean Peninsula. Over a career spanning five decades, Chung has been recognized for his expertise in inter-Korean affairs, crisis diplomacy, and alliance management with the United States.

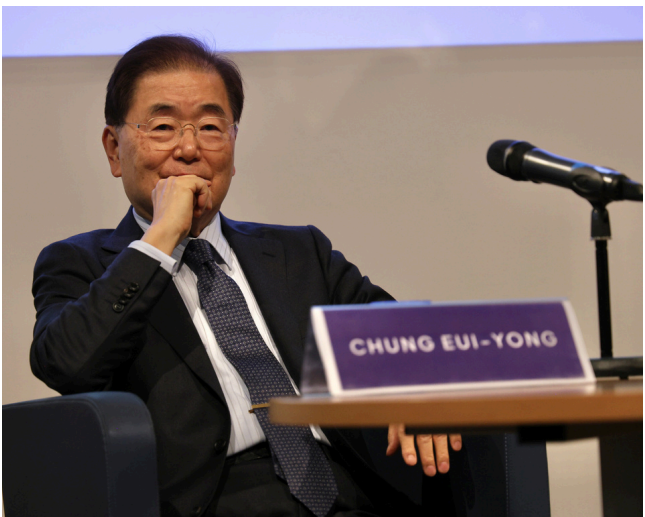
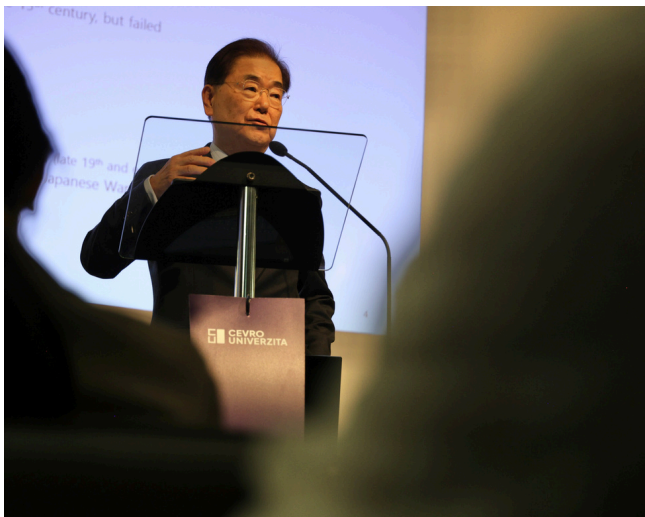
Chung graduated from Seoul National University with a degree in international relations and later pursued advanced studies at the University of Bath in the United Kingdom. He began his career in the Korean foreign service in the 1970s, holding a series of diplomatic posts in Europe, North America, and multilateral institutions. His early work established him as a skilled negotiator and policy thinker in both bilateral and multilateral settings.

From 2004 to 2006, Chung served as Deputy Minister for Trade, where he was involved in key negotiations that laid the groundwork for Korea's modern trade architecture. He subsequently became a member of the National Assembly (2004–2008), contributing to legislative work on foreign affairs and security policy.

Chung's most influential roles came under President Moon Jae-in. In 2017, he was appointed Director of the National Security Office and National Security Adviser, placing him at the center of Seoul's strategy during a period of heightened tensions and unprecedented diplomacy with North Korea. He led high-stakes delegations to Pyongyang and Washington in 2018, playing a pivotal role in arranging the inter-Korean summits and facilitating the first U.S.–DPRK summit in Singapore. His shuttle diplomacy earned international visibility and contributed to a temporary easing of hostilities and the expansion of diplomatic channels.

In 2021, Chung became Minister of Foreign Affairs, where he continued to advocate for dialogue-based approaches to the North Korean nuclear issue, strengthened Korea's multilateral engagement, and managed regional challenges amid growing U.S.–China strategic competition. He held the post until May 2022.

Throughout his career, Chung has been regarded as a consensus-builder with a pragmatic and calming diplomatic style. His contributions have left a lasting imprint on Korean Peninsula diplomacy and the Republic of Korea's role in global affairs.



IMPORTANT EVENTS

Former ROK foreign minister Chung Eui-yong delivered a lecture at CEVRO University

On the 3rd of December, CEVRO University hosted a guest lecture by former South Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs Chung Eui-yong titled Korea: Current Geopolitical Challenges. His talk focused on the evolving geopolitical challenges on the Korean Peninsula. The event was organised by the Center for Asia-Pacific Studies (CAPS) and the discussion was moderated by Jan Zahradil, founder of the centre and chairman of its advisory board.

“I have known Minister Chung since 2017 and have always wanted to bring him to the Czech Republic for a lecture. Thanks to the establishment of CAPS, this has finally been possible. He is a veteran of Korean diplomacy and politics with fifty years of practical experience, and his insights are therefore exceptionally enriching,” said Jan Zahradil, explaining the background of the distinguished guest’s visit.

In his lecture, Mr Chung also discussed the reasons behind the strong ties between the Czech Republic and South Korea: “The Czech Republic is located right in the heart of Europe, which is one of the main reasons Korean companies choose it as an investment destination. At the same time, it has a highly skilled industrial workforce that is hard to find elsewhere in Europe. Another factor is the strong and well-developed infrastructure, which creates a stable and attractive environment for investors. That is why major Korean companies, such as Hyundai, are making large-scale investments.”

The lecture by the prominent South Korean diplomat follows the recent launch of the centre, whose aim is to respond to the growing importance of the Asia-Pacific region and its impact on Europe and the Czech Republic. As part of its activities, CAPS focuses specifically on political, security and economic developments in the region, including changes in the regional power architecture.

“One of the main goals of CAPS is to provide the Czech environment with an Asian perspective, to build bridges between our cultures, and through that to deepen mutual understanding. The visit of such a distinguished figure as Mr Chung is not only a great honour for us but also an excellent opportunity to fulfil this mission,” added Dr Jan Železný, Director of the Center for Asia-Pacific Studies.

The lecture once again confirmed the growing importance of the Center for Asia-Pacific Studies as a platform for research and discussion on geopolitical and economic developments in the region. The event also demonstrated that CEVRO University is systematically strengthening its focus on global security trends.

UPCOMING EVENTS

11 December

We will warmly welcome Dr Mher D. Sahakyan (Armenia) to CEVRO University. Together with our Director Dr Jan Železný and our Head of Research Dr Zdeněk Rod, he will launch the Routledge Handbook of China's Belt and Road Initiative in Eurasia — the product of excellent analytical work by an international team of scholars.

More information:

<https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Handbook-of-Chinas-Belt-and-Road-Initiative-in-Eurasia/Sahakyan-Lo/p/book/9781032840956>



**Official Launch
of the Routledge Handbook
of China's Belt and Road Initiative in Eurasia**

Alongside lecture by Dr. Mher Sahakyan
"Europe and Asia in a Multipolar World Order"

Date: December 11, 2025 at 17:00
Place: Atrium of CEVRO University (Jungmannova 17, Prague 1)

After the lecture: Chapter presentations by Dr. Jan Železný
and Dr. Zdeněk Rod in the Routledge Handbook

Concluding with a moderated discussion with Dr. Sahakyan

Registration:
caps@cevro.cz

CAPS

CAPS IN THE MEDIA

Dr Jan Železný's commentary on the COP 30 climate summit in Brazil for Joj24 Slovak TV:

<https://joj24.noviny.sk/studio-joj-24/1132266-studio-24-klimaticky-samit-v-brazilii>

Dr Jan Železný's commentary on the diplomatic tension between China and Japan over Taiwan claims for Joj24 Slovak TV:

<https://joj24.noviny.sk/studio-joj-24/1135994-studio-24-napaetie-medzi-pekingom-a-tokiom>

Dr Zdeněk Rod's article in the Czech Army and Defence Magazine: Od nešíření k přehodnocení: Jaderná debata v Jižní Koreji [From Nonproliferation to Reconsideration: The Nuclear Debate in South Korea]. Czech Army and Defence Magazine.

<https://www.czdefence.cz/clanek/od-nesireni-k-prehodnoceni-jaderna-debata-v-jizni-koreji>


Dr Zdeněk Rod's article in the Defence News: South Korea's nuclear debate is no longer taboo. Defence News.

<https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/2025/11/25/south-koreas-nuclear-debate-is-no-longer-taboo/>

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