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TOP STORY • ASIA-PACIFIC SUMMITS

Manila to Shenzhen: Trump's Asia Week Builds to a First Three-Way Nuclear Meeting

Manila hosts the first in-person Quad summit in two years; on 19 November, Xi and Putin are due in Shenzhen.

Written and fact-checked by AI · News Pebbles

US President Donald Trump left Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, on Monday 16 November for a week of Asian summits. On Thursday 19 November, in Shenzhen, China, he is due to meet China's Xi Jinping and Russia's Vladimir Putin: the first meeting ever between the three countries' leaders, focused on nuclear stockpiles.

The week opens in Manila, because the Philippines chairs ASEAN, the 11-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, in 2026; its 49th summit runs from 15 to 17 November. Trump arrives on Tuesday for a US-ASEAN Summit, and the Quad, a grouping of the US, India, Japan and Australia, is due to meet on Indo-Pacific security, its first in-person leaders' summit in two years, says the White House. India's Narendra Modi also attends the ASEAN-India Summit and the East Asia Summit, whose members include the ASEAN states along with India, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, the US and Russia.

After a state visit with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Wednesday, Trump flies to Shenzhen for APEC, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, whose leaders meet on 18 and 19 November; the three-way talks follow Thursday's plenary, at Kylin Villa.

Expectations differ. A White House official said no denuclearization agreement is expected and called the session a starting point. China's foreign ministry called the meeting of "ground-breaking significance", but Beijing has long insisted that the US and Russia reduce their own large nuclear arsenals before it will agree to talks on its own stockpile. Trump says he will also raise the war in Ukraine; the Kremlin said anything agreed in Shenzhen cannot be enforced on others.



The week's meetings start in the Philippines, ASEAN's 2026 chair, and end in southern China at the APEC summit.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The week tests how Southeast Asia balances Washington and Beijing, and whether three nuclear powers can start talks with no US-Russia arms treaty in force.

WORLD • BALTIC STATES

Estonia Will Shut Every Border Crossing With Russia From 1 December After a Foiled Attack on a Drone Maker

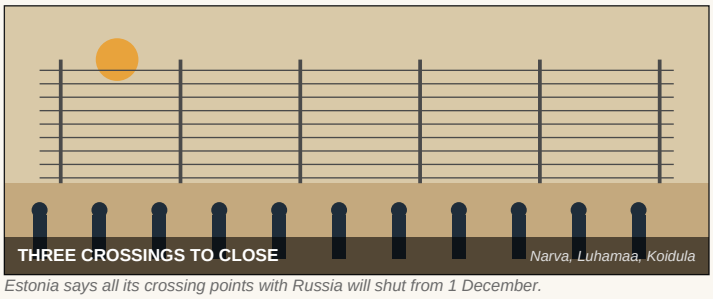
Tallinn says Russia's GRU military intelligence ordered the arson attempt; Moscow says a closure would be more aggressive Russophobia.

Estonia, a member of both the EU and NATO, says it will close all its border crossings with Russia from 1 December. Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna announced the decision on Sunday 15 November, after the authorities stopped what they call an attempted arson attack on Threod Systems, a defence company in Viimsi, north of the capital Tallinn, that makes reconnaissance and attack drones.

Prime Minister Kristen Michal said Russia's GRU military intelligence ordered the "sabotage attempt" on Saturday night. Heightened security and a quick police response averted extensive damage, he said, and the attackers were detained; chief prosecutor Astrid Asi said eight people living in Latvia were arrested. It was not the first case of its kind. In August, Milrem Robotics, a defence subcontractor in Tallinn, was targeted in an attempted arson attack, and Latvian nationals were arrested then too.

The closure matters because few land links remain. Estonia has three crossings with Russia: Narva in the north, and Luhamaa and Koidula in the south. Russia suspended vehicle traffic through Narva in February 2024, though people on foot can still cross, and the three are among the few overland links between Russia and the EU still operating since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Tsahkna said he had told the Finnish, Latvian and Lithuanian foreign ministers about the decision.

Each side frames the move differently. Michal called the incident part of Russia's wider "hybrid war" against Europe and said Estonia "will not be intimidated". Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Moscow would check whether Estonia really planned to shut every crossing and, if so, would see it as more aggressive Russophobia. Pressure is felt elsewhere on the EU's eastern edge: Romania said drones struck three ships near the Sulina Canal, which links the Danube to the Black Sea, on 15 November. No one was hurt.



Estonia says all its crossing points with Russia will shut from 1 December.

CONNECT THE DOTS

Geography: Finland, Latvia and Lithuania, the neighbours Tsahkna briefed, sit with Estonia on the EU's eastern border. Sweden's foreign minister, Maria Malmer Stenergard, said increased hybrid warfare reflects the Kremlin's frustration that it is not winning in Ukraine; Sweden has spent much more on civil defence.

INDIA • WILDLIFE

Electrocution Caused Two in Three of 1,760 Elephant Deaths Linked to People Since 2009, RTI Reply Shows

Electrocution deaths rose 65% in the latest period reported; Odisha, Karnataka and Assam record the most.

More than 1,760 elephants died in India from electrocution, train collisions, poaching and poisoning between 2009-10 and 2025-26. The figures come from the Union environment ministry's reply to a request under the Right to Information (RTI) law, which lets citizens seek records held by public authorities; the reply was reported on 16 November.

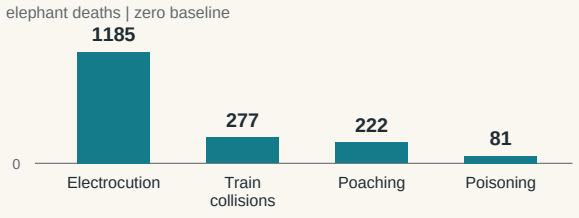
Those losses fall on a population that is smaller than earlier counts suggested. In October 2025, India's first DNA-based count of wild elephants estimated 22,446 animals, within a range of 18,255 to 26,645; the 2017 count had put the figure at 27,312. It was carried out by the Environment Ministry, the Wildlife Institute of India and Project Elephant, the central government scheme that protects elephants and their habitats. Scientists collected 21,056 dung samples and used DNA fingerprinting to tell individual elephants apart. Karnataka has the most elephants, 6,013, ahead of Assam with 4,159.

Of the four causes in the RTI reply, electricity is by far the deadliest. Electrocution caused 1,185 deaths, 67% of the total. Train collisions caused 277 (16%), poaching 222 (13%) and poisoning 81 (5%). The leading cause is also growing: 441 electrocution deaths were recorded between 2021-22 and 2025-26, a 65% increase on the first period reported.

Those deaths are concentrated in a handful of states. Odisha recorded the most electrocutions (238), followed by Karnataka (195) and Assam (191), so the state with the most elephants also ranks second for deaths from electric shocks. On the railways, Assam recorded the most deaths over the whole period (90), followed by West Bengal (68). Counting all four causes together, Odisha had 371 deaths, Assam 356 and Karnataka 223.

The activist who filed the query reads the numbers as a warning about infrastructure. "Electrocution is not an accident," said Amit Gupta. He blamed illegal electric fences, sagging wires and uninsulated power lines in elephant corridors, the routes elephants use to move between habitats; a 2023 government report identified 150 such corridors across 15 states, with West Bengal having the most. Train deaths, Gupta said, come from failures to slow trains, build underpasses and protect corridors.

ELEPHANT DEATHS BY CAUSE, 2009-2026



Deaths from four human-linked causes between 2009-10 and 2025-26, from the environment ministry's RTI reply.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Electrocution and train collisions, the two biggest causes in the ministry's data, both involve human infrastructure. Gupta argues the deaths are preventable with insulated lines, slower trains, underpasses and protected corridors.

POLITICS & CIVICS • UNITED KINGDOM

Before Friday's Brussels Summit, Burnham Sets Four Tests for Any New Deal With the EU

The Prime Minister was due to tell a City of London banquet that Britain has "lost more than we have gained" from Brexit; the Conservatives call his plan a "back door" into the EU.

In the 2016 referendum, 52% of voters backed leaving the European Union. On Monday 16 November Britain's Labour Prime Minister, Andy Burnham, was due to argue that the departure has not paid off. In a speech prepared for the Lord Mayor's Banquet in the City of London, he was expected to say: "The Brexit we were given has not worked." He was also expected to say: "We have lost more than we have gained."

He argues that the promise to "take back control" was not fulfilled, and that a "needlessly hard" departure put up barriers for businesses trading with EU countries. The speech sets the scene for Friday 20 November, when Burnham travels to Brussels for his first formal UK-EU summit.

At that summit he is expected to sign deals on food and energy, and a youth scheme that would let young EU citizens study and work in the UK, and young Britons in the EU. Burnham claims the agreements could add about $22.5 billion to the economy, roughly 0.4% of GDP, and calls them "a win-win." The trade writer David Henig expects talks that have run for eighteen months to largely conclude on food and drink, emissions trading and youth mobility. The UK has already agreed to rejoin the Erasmus student exchange programme in 2027.

A government negotiating a treaty relationship also sets limits on itself. Burnham said he would sign only an agreement that matches Labour's 2024 manifesto and red lines, improves on the existing Brexit deal, better reflects what voters believed they were getting in 2016, and brings visible benefits to ordinary people. Sticking points remain: the EU objects to the UK's demand for an annual cap on the youth scheme, and wants EU students in the UK to pay the lower "home" university fees. No major changes would be agreed before the next general election, due by August 2029 at the latest.

The opposition answers on sovereignty. The Conservative Party accuses Labour of "dragging us into the European Union via the back door", arguing that Britain would have to follow EU rules without a say in shaping them. Burnham, for his part, has been working on European ties in person: the previous Thursday he addressed European leaders at the European Political Community meeting in Dublin, alongside Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

WHERE EACH SIDE STANDS

Burnham: the deals are "a win-win"
EU: objects to an annual cap on the youth scheme
Conservatives: Britain would follow EU rules without a say

Positions reported before the 20 November UK-EU summit in Brussels; none of these questions is settled yet.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Changing a relationship set by a referendum need not mean a new vote: the government negotiates sector by sector, publishes tests for any deal, and answers an opposition that frames the issue as who makes the rules.

ECONOMY • INDIA PRICES

Wholesale Inflation Climbs to 12.29%, a Series High, as Fuel and Power Prices Jump 32.84%

Food prices at the wholesale level eased slightly; ICRA thinks October was the peak and sees about 11.6% in November.

Prices at the wholesale level, what businesses pay for goods traded in bulk, rose 12.29% in October 2026 compared with a year earlier, up from 11.39% in September. The preliminary figures, released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Monday 16 November, are the highest in the new Wholesale Price Index (WPI) series, which uses 2022-23 as its base year.

The index tracks three broad groups: primary articles, fuel and power, and manufactured goods. The WPI for all commodities stood at 113.3 in October, against 112.5 in September. Food, counting both primary food articles and processed food, makes up about 25% of the index.

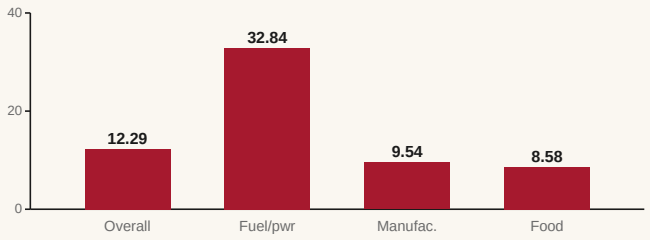
Of those groups, fuel and power drove the jump. Inflation in that group rose to 32.84% from 25.85%; mineral oils were up 45.57%, and electricity prices swung from a 0.43% fall in September to an 8.06% rise. ICRA's Rahul Agrawal said fuel and power accounted for 83 of the 90 basis points (hundredths of a percentage point) by which the headline rate rose, and that the reading beat ICRA's 11.8% estimate. Bank of Baroda chief economist Madan Sabnavis attributed the surge to a low base, higher crude oil prices and strong power demand during heat waves in several states.

The other groups moved less. Primary articles inflation rose to 9.24% from 8.67%, while manufactured goods eased to 9.54% from 9.76%. Within manufacturing, chemicals rose 17.53%, basic metals 17.21% and textiles 13.67%, against 3% for pharmaceuticals. The WPI food index eased to 8.58% from 8.66%. Average wholesale inflation for April to October 2026-27 was 10.14%.

What happens next depends on whether companies pass these costs on. Sabnavis said the increases will "pressurise companies into increasing their product prices"; so far firms have passed on only a limited part. ICRA expects inflation peaked in October and sees about 11.6% in November, depending on global oil and commodity prices. The November data is due on 14 December.

WHOLESALE INFLATION, OCTOBER 2026

% rise on a year earlier (fuel/pwr: fuel and power)



Fuel and power rose far faster than the index as a whole; food inflation at the wholesale level eased slightly.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Wholesale prices are costs for businesses. One economist quoted here warns that companies, which have so far passed on only part of these increases, may raise their product prices, which is how wholesale inflation can reach household budgets.

THINK LIKE AN ANALYST

If fuel and power explain 83 of the 90 basis points, what does that say about price pressure in the rest of the index? How much of a 32.84% rise could come from a low base rather than new price increases, and what data would show whether companies are passing costs on to shoppers?

SCIENCE & TECH • ASTRONOMY

Built to Study Dark Energy, Europe's Euclid Telescope Finds Its First Comet Between Jupiter and Saturn

A streak in survey images led a Helsinki scientist to C/2026 S1, about 1.3 billion km away.

The European Space Agency's Euclid space telescope has found its first comet, designated C/2026 S1 and nicknamed "comet Euclid". When it was observed, between 16 and 24 September, the comet was about 1.3 billion km (807 million miles) away, between the orbits of Jupiter and Saturn. The discovery, featured by Space.com on 16 November, was made by Mikko Pontinen, a scientist at the University of Helsinki, with the Solar System Objects Science Working Group of the Euclid Consortium. Its name follows the standard system for comets: "C/" marks one that does not return on a known short orbit, and "2026 S1" records that it was the first found in the second half of September 2026.

The comet is a by-product of a very different job. Euclid is an ESA mission, with contributions from NASA, designed for long, slow observations of distant galaxies to help scientists study dark energy and dark matter, not to image fast-moving comets. Dark matter is unseen matter detected only through its gravity; dark energy is the name given to whatever is speeding up the expansion of the universe. Euclid lifted off on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida, on 1 July 2023, to survey one third of the sky over six years. It observes from the Sun-Earth Lagrange point 2 (L2), on average 1.5 million km from Earth, and its nominal survey started on 14 February 2024.

How the comet was found shows how astronomers sift survey data. Pontinen's software flagged "a streak" smeared across several images, the sign of a fast-moving object. He then predicted where it should appear in other images and eventually located it in five sets. A closer look showed a fuzzy cloud around it, which marks an active object, such as a comet, shedding dust and gas. Comets are lumps of ice and dust; as sunlight warms them, ice turns to gas and carries dust away, forming that hazy cloud, called a coma. Finally, the team checked existing comet records to confirm it was new.

The find has uses beyond the catalogue. Future scientists might aim Euclid at comets in the outer solar system on purpose, and discoveries like this one help researchers spot "noise", such as comet trails, in Euclid's images of distant galaxies.

HOW A SURVEY TELESCOPE FOUND A COMET

1. Software flags a streak across several images
2. Predicted positions find it in five sets of images
3. A fuzzy cloud shows an active object shedding dust and gas
4. Records confirm the comet is new

The discovery steps as described in the report, from a flagged streak to a confirmed new comet.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Large sky surveys collect far more than their main targets. Learning to spot moving objects such as comets both adds to knowledge of the outer solar system and helps clean the images used for Euclid's main work on dark energy and dark matter.

ONE-LINE BRIEFS

• European Union: Foreign ministers in Brussels added 113 names to the EU's sanctions on Russia on 16 November, nearly 50 of them banks and financial institutions, and the EU approved its largest single payment to Ukraine under the Ukraine Facility, nearly 8 billion euros.

• United States: Flights were close to normal on Monday after the FAA halted departures nationwide for more than four hours on 13 November, a stop officials traced to a router upgrade at a remote facility in El Dorado, Arkansas, with no sign of a cyberattack.

• COP31: The UN climate summit in Antalya, Türkiye, opened its final week with an 18-page first draft that includes a goal of electricity supplying 35% of global final energy by 2035 and $120 billion a year in adaptation finance by 2035, while India opposed citing scientific reports from outside the UN process.

• Cricket: India beat defending champions Pakistan by one wicket off the final ball to win the Under-19 Asia Cup in Oman on 14 November, chasing Pakistan's 337 for 9 as Mohit Ulva hit the winning four for India's ninth title in the tournament.

VOCABULARY BUILDER

Words that unlock today's news

Hybrid war
Hostile action that mixes sabotage, disinformation and other methods short of open warfare. Today: Estonia's prime minister used the term for a foiled arson attack.

Wholesale Price Index
A measure of price changes for goods traded in bulk between businesses. Today: India's WPI inflation reached 12.29% in October.

Denuclearization
The reduction or removal of nuclear weapons. Today: a White House official said no denuclearization agreement is expected in Shenzhen.

Lagrange point
A spot in space where a spacecraft can hold its position relative to two large bodies, such as the Sun and Earth. Today: Euclid observes from L2.

DID YOU KNOW?

Shenzhen, which hosts this week's APEC summit, was a small town across the border from Hong Kong when China made it one of its first Special Economic Zones in 1980, opening it to foreign investment. It has since grown into one of China's largest cities and a world centre of electronics manufacturing.

EXPLAINER

Arms control: why a three-way meeting is new

Nuclear arms control means rival states agreeing limits on their weapons and letting each other check that the limits are kept. For decades it was mostly a two-country business, because the United States and the Soviet Union, and later Russia, held the great majority of the world's nuclear warheads.

The most recent treaty between them, New START, was signed in Prague in 2010 by Presidents Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev. It capped each side at 1,550 deployed strategic warheads and allowed on-site inspections. In 2021 the two countries extended it by five years; in 2023 Russia suspended its participation. It expired in February 2026, leaving no US-Russia nuclear arms treaty in force.

China was never part of these treaties. Its arsenal is smaller, and Beijing has long insisted that the US and Russia reduce their own large arsenals before it will agree to talks on its own. That is why a meeting of all three leaders, even one that a White House official says will produce no agreement, marks a change in format.

QUIZ

Eight questions on this issue

1. The 11-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations holds its 49th summit in Manila. Which country chairs ASEAN in 2026?

(a) Singapore (b) The Philippines (c) Thailand

2. After the APEC leaders' plenary on 19 November, where is Trump due to meet Xi Jinping, with Vladimir Putin joining them?

(a) Kylin Villa in Shenzhen (b) The presidential palace in Manila (c) Busan, South Korea

3. EU foreign ministers added names to their sanctions on Russia on 16 November, nearly 50 of them banks and financial institutions. How many names were added?

(a) 50 (b) 8 (c) 113

4. An RTI reply counts more than 1,760 elephant deaths from four causes since 2009-10. What share was caused by electrocution?

(a) 16% (b) 67% (c) 13%

5. Andy Burnham travels to Brussels for his first formal UK-EU summit. On what date?

(a) 20 November (b) 16 November (c) 14 December

6. India's wholesale inflation reached the highest level in the series that uses 2022-23 as its base. What was the October rate?

(a) 11.39% (b) 12.29% (c) 32.84%

7. Europe's Euclid telescope has found its first comet, C/2026 S1. Between the orbits of which two planets was it observed?

(a) Mars and Jupiter (b) Uranus and Neptune (c) Jupiter and Saturn

8. The Quad leaders' meeting in Manila is the first in person in two years. Which countries make up the Quad with the US?

(a) India, Japan and Australia (b) India, China and Japan (c) Japan, South Korea and Australia

Answers: 1-b, 2-a, 3-c, 4-b, 5-a, 6-b, 7-c, 8-a

TOMORROW'S WATCHLIST

• Manila, 17 November: the Quad leaders' meeting, the US-ASEAN Summit, the 23rd ASEAN-India Summit and the 21st East Asia Summit. Watch for the trade deal with Thailand that the White House says Trump will sign, and for any word on the South China Sea code, which the Philippines hopes can be concluded under Singapore's chairmanship next year.

• Shenzhen, 18-19 November: APEC leaders meet, and on 19 November Trump is due to meet Xi, with Putin joining them. A White House official expects a starting point, not a denuclearization deal. Watch whether Ukraine and Iran come up, whether Kim Jong Un appears, and any sign on the US-China trade truce from Busan, which expires in January.

• Brussels, 20 November: Burnham's first formal UK-EU summit, with deals on food, energy and a youth scheme expected; the open questions are the UK's demand for an annual cap on the scheme and the fees EU students would pay. In India, November wholesale inflation data is due on 14 December. In Washington, Senate Democrats pick their leader by secret ballot, on 1 December according to Axios, with Chris Van Hollen challenging Chuck Schumer.

You are not just reading the news — you are learning to think about it. See you tomorrow.