



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



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Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003

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### ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group (DPG) is among India's oldest think tanks with its primary focus on strategic and international issues of critical national interest. DPG is a non-partisan institution and is independently funded by a non-profit Trust. Over past decades, DPG has established itself in both domestic and international circles and is widely recognised today among the top security think tanks of India and of Asia's major powers.

Since 2016, in keeping with India's increasing global profile, DPG has expanded its focus areas to include India's regional and global role and its policies in the Indo-Pacific. In a realist environment, DPG remains mindful of the need to align India's ambitions with matching strategies and capabilities, from diplomatic initiatives to security policy and military modernisation.

At a time of disruptive change in the global order, DPG aims to deliver research based, relevant, reliable and realist policy perspectives to an actively engaged public, both at home and abroad. DPG is deeply committed to the growth of India's national power and purpose, the security and prosperity of the people of India and India's contributions to the global public good. We remain firmly anchored within these foundational principles which have defined DPG since its inception.

### DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

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## Contents

South Asia.....	1
East & South East Asia .....	8
Central & West Asia .....	13
United States.....	17
Europe & Russia .....	19
Africa & Latin America.....	23

## South Asia

### India

#### [Defence ministry decides to airlift 23 oxygen generation plants from Germany](#)

April 23, 2021, Mint

The defence ministry today decided to airlift 23 mobile oxygen generating plants from Germany as several states reeled under an acute shortage of medical oxygen due to a massive surge in coronavirus cases, officials said.

#### [US Senate committee approves China strategic competition bill; backs enhanced security ties with India](#)

April 22, 2021, The Economic Times

A powerful Senate committee has overwhelmingly approved the key China strategic competition bill which among other things supports the QUAD grouping and enhances security partnership with India.

#### [Why India opted for a 'stand-alone' agreement with China in Ladakh](#)

April 22, 2021, The Print

There has been a phased but continuous source-based coverage and commentary about the lack of progress on the disengagement process – with special reference to Gogra-Hot Springs and Depsang Plains – since the 11th Corps Commander-level talks held on 9 April. In the past, deliberate 'government leaks' on the situation in Eastern Ladakh were given as handouts to all media houses and the story was broken almost simultaneously.

#### [Rafale weaponry prompts China, Pak to alter defence posture](#)

April 23, 2021, The Hindustan Times

With the Indian Air Force's (IAF) Rafale fighter successfully test-firing the 60km range Hammer air-to-ground modular weapon in March, the air defence posture of both China and Pakistan has changed in the wake of the advent of the multi-role fighter in South Asia, according to people familiar with the matter.

#### [Navy seizes narcotics worth Rs 3,000 crore from fishing vessel](#)

April 19, 2021, The Times of India

The Indian Navy has seized narcotics worth Rs 3000 crore from a fishing vessel, suspected to be of foreign origin in the Arabian sea.

### [China brought enormous force to border without provocation: Jaishankar](#)

April 20, 2021, Times Now

China brought enormous force to the border, apparently referring to the Line of Actual Control (LAC), without provocation, said Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar.

### [Jaishankar seeks more say for India in global decision making](#)

April 22, 2021, Mint

Foreign minister S Jaishankar made a strong case for broad-basing global decision making, with countries like India being given a greater say in the process based on its record.

### [Defence Minister Rajnath Singh assures Indonesia of full support to trace missing submarine](#)

April 23, 2021, India Today

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh spoke to his Indonesian counterpart Gen Prabowo Subianto and assured him of India's full support to Indonesia in tracing an attack submarine that went missing with 53 people on board during a military exercise in the waters north of Bali.

## **Pakistan**

### [US sanctions also target Pakistani firms, individuals in move against Russia](#)

April 17, 2021, Dawn

Ten of the 32 individuals and entities sanctioned by US President Joe Biden on for participating in Russia's alleged cybercrimes are based in Karachi and Lahore, shows an official US statement.

### [Opposition blasts govt over 'illogical' accord with TLP](#)

April 17, 2021, Dawn

The opposition lashed out at the government in the National Assembly for signing what it called an "illogical" agreement with the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) last year about expulsion of French ambassador from the country and severing of trade relations with France over its government's stance on publication of blasphemous sketches in a magazine.

### [FM Qureshi leaves for UAE on three-day official visit](#)

April 18, 2021, Dawn

Amid reports that the United Arab Emirates has been mediating between India and Pakistan for reducing fears of a conflict in South Asia for the past few

months, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi visited Gulf state from April 17-19. During the visit, the foreign minister met his counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and other UAE dignitaries.

#### [TLP storms Lahore police station, takes DSP, four cops hostage](#)

April 19, 2021, Dawn

Three people were killed and hundreds of others, including 15 policemen, injured in a clash between workers of the banned Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) and police at Yateem Khana Chowk here on April 18.

#### [JUI-F will join TLP's long march: Fazl](#)

April 19, 2021, Dawn

Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman condemned the police action against the activists of the recently-banned Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) in Lahore and termed it a "state brutality". He declared that if the TLP activists decided to march on Islamabad with injured and dead bodies then his party would join them in protest.

#### [Four drivers die of starvation in Makran](#)

April 19, 2021, Dawn

Four drivers died after their condition deteriorated due to non-availability of food and water while they, along with hundreds of others, were stranded in border areas of Makran division. Hundreds of pick-ups and other vehicles loaded with Iranian petrol and diesel were stuck up in the border areas when authorities stopped them from moving ahead after they crossed into Pakistan from Iran. The Pak-Iran border was closed at three points and the drivers of these vehicles had no other source to get food and water.

#### [FO hails rollover of \\$2bn loan by UAE](#)

April 21, 2021, Dawn

The Foreign Office of Pakistan hailed United Arab Emirates' decision to roll over \$2 billion loan as proof of strong bilateral ties.

#### [Third border crossing point with Iran being inaugurated](#)

April 21, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan and Iran inaugurated the Pishin-Mand border crossing point for facilitating trade. Opening of the additional border crossing, this is the third between the two countries.

### [Railway project sent to Chinese bank for approval of \\$6bn loan](#)

April 21, 2021, Dawn

The Chinese government has sent Pakistan's first modern railways' infrastructure project – Main Line-1 (ML-1) – to the Exim Bank of China for approval of a \$6 billion loan after all technical, administrative and other issues have finally been resolved, paving the way for launching civil work on this scheme within this year.

### [Qureshi holds delegation-level talks with Iran's Zarif](#)

April 22, 2021

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi held delegation-level talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Dr Javad Zarif in Tehran on April 21. During the discussion, the two sides reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations, highlighting the commonality of views on important regional and international issues.

### [Four killed, 12 injured in Quetta hotel bomb blast](#)

April 22, 2021, Dawn

At least four people, including two private security guards, were killed and 12 others suffered injuries in a bomb blast that occurred in the parking lot of Serena Hotel here on April 21.

### [Pakistan, Afghan, Turkey FMs to discuss Afghan peace in Istanbul](#)

April 22, 2021, The Express Tribune

Foreign ministers from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkey met to discuss peace efforts. The trilateral meeting will take place in Turkey after key conference on Afghanistan peace efforts was postponed for the second time after the Taliban refused to be part of the process.

## **Afghanistan**

### [Time for Pakistan to Decide on Afghan Policy, Ghani Says](#)

April 18, 2021, Tolo News

President Ashraf Ghani said that the announcement of the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan will require that Pakistan make a decision about whether to opt for cooperation or enmity with its neighbor.

### [Afghan Leaders Seek Political Agreement Ahead of Troop Withdrawal](#)

April 18, 2021, Tolo News

Afghan politicians hope that the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban will achieve a political agreement on peace ahead of the announced date for the withdrawal of international troops from Afghanistan, predicting that an otherwise scenario will not be in the country's favor.

### [U.S.-backed Afghan peace conference in Turkey postponed over Taliban no-show –sources](#)

April 21, 2021, Reuters

A Washington-backed Afghan peace conference in Turkey has been postponed due to the Taliban's non-participation. The meeting was scheduled for April 24 to fast-track an agreement between Taliban insurgents and the Afghan government following Washington's announcement that foreign troops would leave Afghanistan by September 11.

### [Taliban Sought Release of Prisoners Before Istanbul Talks: Source](#)

April 21, 2021, Tolo News

The Taliban reportedly asked the US to ensure the release of its prisoners and the removal of UN sanctions on the Taliban's leaders in exchange for the participation of the group in the Turkey conference.

### [Pentagon Seeks Carrier Deployment as It Exits Afghanistan, in Sign It's Readying for a Fight](#)

April 21, 2021, The New York times

The US military commanders are seeking to deploy an aircraft carrier specifically to help protect NATO troops in Afghanistan as they withdraw, the clearest sign yet that the Pentagon is preparing for a fight as it closes the books on America's longest war.

### [Taliban Attacks Rising Despite Intl Efforts for Peace](#)

April 20, 2021, Tolo News

Despite not officially announcing a spring fighting season, the Taliban has increased attacks in various regions of the country—including the strategic areas of Kandahar in the south, Balkh in the north, Herat in the west and Nangarhar in the east.



## **Bangladesh**

### [5 killed in Bangladesh after police open fire at Chinese joint venture](#)

April 17, 2021, The Hindustan Times

At least five people were killed and several others left injured in a clash between police and workers at a Chinese joint venture coal-fired plant in Banshkhali of Bangladesh's Chittagong region, said police. The workers had been protesting against the authorities over non-payment of dues and flexibility in work hours to let them perform Islamic rituals during the month of Ramzan.

### ['India to support Bangladesh in its current vaccination drive'](#)

April 23, 2021, Dajiworld

Amid the global crisis of vaccine, India will cooperate Bangladesh to continue its current vaccination drive by trying its best to supply Covid-19 vaccines, said Indian envoy in Dhaka Vikram Doraiswami.

## **Nepal**

### [India gifts 39 ambulances, 6 school buses to Nepal](#)

April 22, 2021, ANI

India gifted 39 ambulances equipped with ventilators and six school buses to Nepal.

### [China did not invite Nepal in Boao Forum for Asia meet: Report](#)

April 22, 2021, India Blooms

Nepal, which has always been a regular participant at the Boao Forum for Asia since 2001, has not received an invitation from China for this year to attend the event.

## **Sri Lanka**

### [Chinese defence minister General Wei Fenghe to visit Sri Lanka next week](#)

April 22, 2021, The Economic Times

Chinese Defence Minister General Wei Fenghe will arrive in Sri Lanka next week on a three-day visit during which he will hold talks with President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, the government information department said.

[Sri Lanka asks China-bound ship to leave Hambantota port after uranium found on it](#)

April 22, 2021, India Today

Sri Lanka has asked a China-bound cargo ship to leave the strategic southern port of Hambantota after it was found to be carrying radioactive uranium without declaring it to authorities, officials said.

[China-built port city plan challenged in Sri Lanka's top court](#)

April 20, 2021, The Hindustan Times

Sri Lanka's Supreme Court began hearing petitions challenging President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's plan to set up a panel to lure investment into a Chinese built port city in Colombo.

## East & South East Asia

### China

#### [Xi stresses multilateralism, global environmental governance system](#)

April 22, 2021, Xinhua

Chinese President Xi Jinping said China, as a participant, contributor and trailblazer in global ecological conservation, is firmly committed to putting multilateralism into action and promoting a fair and equitable system of global environmental governance for win-win cooperation.

#### [Full Text: Remarks by Chinese President Xi Jinping at Leaders Summit on Climate](#)

April 22, 2021, Xinhua

Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a speech at the Leaders Summit on Climate via video link from Beijing.

#### [Japan-US statement slammed for sending wrong signal on Taiwan question, interfering in China's internal affairs](#)

April 17, 2021, Global Times

Japan escalated its interference in China's affairs as leaders of Japan and the US made China a focus of their meeting and for the first time in half a century mentioned China's Taiwan in their joint statement.

#### [China opposes Australia govt cancelling Victoria's Belt and Road Initiative deals with China: embassy](#)

April 21, 2021, Global Times

Chinese Embassy in Australia said that it resolutely opposes Canberra's move to cancel a Belt and Road Initiative deal between Victoria and China, calling it another "unreasonable and provocative" move against China that will hurt Australia itself.

#### [Xi Jinping on building maritime community with shared future](#)

April 23, 2021, Xinhua

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy celebrated its founding anniversary. Two years ago, Chinese President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, proposed building a maritime community with a shared future when he met with heads of the foreign delegations invited to participate in events marking the 70th founding anniversary of the PLA Navy.

### [UK parliament declares genocide in China's Xinjiang; Beijing condemns move](#)

April 23, 2021, Reuters

Britain's parliament called for the government to take action to end what lawmakers described as genocide in China's Xinjiang region, stepping up pressure on ministers to go further in their criticism of Beijing. But Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government again steered clear of declaring genocide over what it says are "industrial-scale" human rights abuses against the mainly Muslim Uighur community in Xinjiang. Ministers say any decision on declaring a genocide is up to the courts.

### [China's Fishing Fleet, the World's Largest, Drives Beijing's Global Ambitions](#)

April 21, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

In Beijing's push to become a maritime superpower, China's fishing fleet has grown to become the world's largest by far—and it has turned more aggressive, provoking tensions around the globe. The Chinese fleet is helping the country stake out a bigger presence at sea, including by building a world-wide network of ports. The vessels, rigged with winches and booms and pulling giant nets, can be twice as large as a naval patrol boat, at an average of almost 200 feet long. Fishing crews have helped establish island settlements in waters subject to territorial disputes with neighbors.

### [China's Xi Lays Out Vision for a World Without a Single Dominant Power](#)

April 20, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

Chinese leader Xi Jinping used a high-profile speech to call for equitable management of world affairs, underscoring Beijing's attempts to reshape its relationship with the U.S. into one on a more equal footing. "We must not let the rules set by one or a few countries be imposed on others, or allow unilateralism pursued by certain countries to set the pace for the whole world," Mr. Xi said in a video speech at the Bo'ao Forum for Asia, an annual gathering on the southern Chinese island of Hainan.

## **Japan**

### [Suga to declare state of emergency in Osaka; no decision on Tokyo](#)

April 21, 2021, Japan Today

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has decided to declare another state of emergency in Osaka Prefecture as a surge in severe cases of COVID-19 strains its medical system, government sources, while Tokyo is set to seek the same move in a matter of days.

### [Japanese journalists call for Myanmar junta to free detained colleague](#)

April 21, 2021, Japan Today

A group of journalists in Japan called on Myanmar's junta to free a colleague, Yuki Kitazumi, detained in Yangon following a crackdown on media amid ongoing protests against the military overthrow of an elected government.

### [SDF helping army in Philippines in ODA context](#)

April 20, 2021, Asahi Shimbun

Life-saving equipment used by the Self-Defense Forces in rescue missions during natural disasters is being provided to the Philippine military as part of the government's Official Development Assistance (ODA).

### [Biden and Suga project unity against China's assertiveness](#)

April 17, 2021, The Asahi Shimbun

President Joe Biden sought to present a united front with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga to counter an increasingly assertive China as the U.S. leader held his first face-to-face White House summit since taking office.

### [Japanese PM Yoshihide Suga calls off visit to India](#)

April 21, 2021, Mint

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has called off a planned visit to India and the Philippines in the wake of a resurgence of covid-19 infections in Japan, reports in Japanese media quoting unnamed sources said.

### [Why Japan-US summit holds promise for India](#)

April 21, 2021, The Indian Express

The Japan-US Summit on April 16 was President Joe Biden's first formal diplomatic venture. Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga of Japan was the first guest – he is scheduled to visit India next. Despite the US's engagements in other parts of the world, including Russia, Europe, Afghanistan, it is China and the Indo-Pacific that is likely to preoccupy them the most.

### [Tokyo Flexes Its Talons](#)

April 19, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's visit to the White House is being hailed in both countries as a major success. Tokyo cannot be 100% sure where the Biden administration's China policy is going. While Mr. Suga was in Washington, John Kerry was in China pushing for a grand bargain on climate. Under the circumstances, Mr. Suga's most prudent course was to avoid offending anyone in Washington without unduly shocking China—and this is what he seems to have accomplished.

## **Korea**

### [Foreign ministry denies reports linking vaccine cooperation with US to Quad participation](#)

April 23, 2021, The Korea Herald

The foreign ministry denied media reports speculating that South Korea was not included on the U.S. list of potential foreign vaccine support because it has taken a negative stance about joining the U.S.-led Quad forum.

### [US fully ready to deter any aggression from N. Korea: US commander](#)

April 23, 2021, The Korea Herald

The United States is ready and able to deter any aggression from North Korea, the chief of the US Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) said also highlighting the US security commitment to South Korea.

### [South Korea Shuns Coal-Power Financing Amid Rising U.S. Pressure](#)

April 22, 2021, Bloomberg

South Korea will halt state-backed financing of coal-fired power plants overseas and also plans to strengthen its emissions reduction commitment under the Paris agreement.

### [Cheong Wa Dae denies report on S. Korea-U.S. summit postponement](#)

April 23, 2021, Yonhap News Agency

Cheong Wa Dae refuted as "groundless" a news report that a summit meeting between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Joe Biden set for late May could be postponed.

## **Southeast Asia**

### [Japan, Thailand, Vietnam Vie with China for Influence in Impoverished, Landlocked Laos](#)

April 23, 2021, VOA

Laos is getting a new round of aid and investment offers this year as foreign governments hope to dilute China's increasing influence over the poor, landlocked country, observers in the region say.

### [China to keep supporting Vietnam in taking socialist path for better future](#)

April 17, 2021, CGTN

The Chinese side, as a comrade and brother, will continue to firmly support Vietnam in taking the socialist road for a better future, said Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

### [India offers help to Vietnam in warship-building & maintainance](#)

April 20, 2021, The Times of India

India offered all possible help by its defence and other shipyards to Vietnam in construction and maintainance of warships, building up on its earlier assurance of further assisting the country in modernizing and training its armed forces.

### [Singapore and Indonesia exporters catch China's GDP tailwind](#)

April 19, 2021, Nikkei Asia

Southeast Asian countries' exports are growing on the back of China's sharp rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic, the latest official statistics show, brightening the region's economic picture.

### [China, Indonesia to deepen Belt and Road, vaccine cooperation](#)

April 20, 2021, CGTN

Chinese President Xi Jinping called for intensified efforts to align the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with Indonesia's Global Maritime Axis vision in a phone conversation with Indonesian President Joko Widodo.

### [Philippines protests against China's 'threatening' South China Sea presence](#)

April 23, 2021, The Straits Times

The Philippines has sent two new diplomatic protests to China over its failure to withdraw what it called "threatening" vessels that were massing in contested areas of the South China Sea.

### [Myanmar unity government says it must be part of any ASEAN bid to end crisis](#)

April 18, 2021, The Economic Times

Myanmar's neighbours have to negotiate with the newly formed government of national unity if they want to help resolve the turmoil triggered a by a Feb. 1 military coup and they should not recognise the junta, a unity government official said.

### [Thai PM to Skip Special ASEAN Summit on Myanmar](#)

April 21, 2021, The Diplomat

This weekend's special summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will go ahead without the participation of Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, the leader confirmed.

## Central & West Asia

### Central Asia

#### [Three-Person Crew Lands Safely In Kazakhstan From ISS Mission](#)

April 17, 2021, RFE/RL

Two Russian cosmonauts and a U.S. astronaut have landed safely in the Central Asian country of Kazakhstan following their six-month stint at the International Space Station (ISS). Cosmonauts Sergei Ryzhikov and Sergei Kud-Sverchkov and astronaut Kathleen Rubins touched down as scheduled in the early morning hours of April 17, according to a live broadcast on the television channel of Russia's Roscosmos space agency.

#### [Facebook Removes Kyrgyz President's Post Promoting Toxic Root To Fight COVID](#)

April 19, 2021, RFE/RL

Facebook has removed Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov's controversial post promoting a toxic root for treatment of COVID-19, calling it "misinformation." Japarov's post in question, in which he announced that his country found an "effective" method to treat COVID-19, was posted on Facebook on April 15.

#### [Outspoken Critic Of Turkmen Government Says She Is Under Pressure In Turkey](#)

April 21, 2021, RFE/RL

A Turkmen activist and outspoken critic of the tightly controlled Central Asian nation's government who resides in Istanbul says she has come under pressure in Turkey ahead of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Ashgabat. Dursoltan Taganova said on April 20 that she was summoned to Turkey's immigration service, where she was warned that she may face problems with her residency unless she stops her political activities.

#### [Uzbekistan receives first batch of Sputnik V vaccine](#)

April 23, 2021, AKIPress News Agency

The first consignment of Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine was airlifted to Uzbekistan on April 23 with assistance of the Russian Direct Investment Fund, the Ministry of Health said. The country plans to vaccinate around 4 million against COVID-19 from April-June.



### [Tajikistan: Imam detained on extremism charges after speech at funeral](#)

April 23, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

An imam at a Dushanbe mosque has been detained on extremism charges after he called a late Islamic cleric "one of great leaders of the country". State media outlets reported on April 22 that 44-year-old Imam-hatib Abdulhaq Obidov (aka Makhsumi Abdulhaq) from a mosque in Dushanbe's Shohmansur district had been detained on suspicion of being a follower of the Salafi branch of Islam, which has been labeled as extremist and banned in the Central Asian country.

### [Kazakhstan to apply homegrown COVID vaccine next week](#)

April 23, 2021, Anadolu Agency

Kazakhstan will begin to administer its homegrown coronavirus vaccine to residents next week, according to a statement by its Prime Ministry. The first 50,000 doses of the QazVak vaccine were produced by the Scientific Research Institute for Biological Safety Problems in Kazakhstan's southern Jambyl province, said the statement.

### [India, Kyrgyzstan special forces start two-week counter-terror drills](#)

April 17, 2021, WION

The special forces of India and Kyrgyzstan have started a two-week military exercise in Bishkek with a focus on counter-terror drills. The exercise named, `Khanjar`, was inaugurated at the Special Forces Brigade of National Guards of Kyrgyz Republic in Bishkek. It is the eighth edition of the India-Kyrgyz Joint Special Forces Exercise.

## **West Asia**

### [Indian External Affairs Minister Jaishankar Meets Sheikh Abdullah; Discusses Covid, Bilateral Cooperation](#)

April 18, 2021, Khaleej Times

During the meeting, held at the ministry's headquarters in Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Abdullah and Dr. Jaishankar discussed the historic relations between the UAE and India and ways to enhance cooperation, particularly in commercial and health fields. They also discussed the latest Covid-19 developments, the two countries' efforts to contain its repercussions, and the global efforts to provide vaccines to all countries.

### [UAE is Mediating between India and Pakistan, Says Senior Emirati Diplomat](#)

April 15, 2021, AL Jazeera

The United Arab Emirates' (UAE) envoy to Washington has confirmed that the Gulf state is mediating between India and Pakistan to help the nuclear-armed rivals reach a "healthy and functional" relationship. Top intelligence officers from India and Pakistan held secret talks in Dubai in January in a new effort to calm military tension over the disputed region of Kashmir.

### [India to Spend \\$200 Million in Next 5-7 Years to Promote Hydrogen Use](#)

April 16, 2021, The Economic Times

India has asked its state-run oil and gas companies to set up seven hydrogen pilot plants by the end of this financial year, India's oil secretary Tarun Kapoor also said at the Hydrogen Economy - New Delhi Dialogue event.

### [ADNOC to Explore Potential of Hydrogen Market with India](#)

April 16, 2021, Arab News

The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) sees a potential market for hydrogen in public and private Indian companies to serve the country's growing demand for energy and need for cleaner fuels, said Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, minister of industry and advanced technology and CEO of ADNOC.

### [India Considers Reviving FTA Talks with Gulf Cooperation Council](#)

April 12, 2021, Swarajya Magazine

India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are reconsidering a free trade agreement (FTA) as United Arab Emirates (UAE), India's largest trading partner in the grouping has reached out to India seeking to revive the talks which have been stalled since 2008.

### [After Natanz Blast, Iran Vows to Ramp Up Uranium Enrichment](#)

April 13, 2021, Voice of America

Iran warned it would start enriching uranium up to 60 percent purity, two days after an explosion it blamed on Israel hit its key nuclear facility in Natanz. The announcement cast a shadow over on-going talks in Vienna aimed at salvaging the tattered 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

### [U.S. is Expected to Approve Some Arms Sales to U.A.E. and Saudi](#)

#### [Arabia](#)

April 14, 2021, The New York Times

The Biden administration will approve \$23 billion in weapons sales to the United Arab Emirates, according to a State Department spokesman, including

F-35 fighter jets and armed Reaper drones. The fate of former President Donald Trump's arms sales to Saudi Arabia is still less clear.

[China Hesitant over J-10c Barter Deal with Cash-strapped Iran: Experts](#)

April 15, 2021, South China Morning Post

Tehran is said to be interested in buying 36 of the advanced Chinese fighter jets but finding the cash could be difficult. Military analysts say now is not the time to exchange weapons for oil but believe Beijing is considering the move.

[Israeli General Who Helped Destroy Iraq, Syria Nuclear Plants Says Stopping Iran is Much Harder](#)

April 17, 2021, CNBC

Amos Yadlin said Iran's program is "much more fortified and dispersed," while Iraq and Syria's nuclear programs were concentrated in one place. Iran's nuclear program is in dozens of sites, many buried deep beneath mountains. On top of that, it isn't clear intelligence agencies know all the details about the locations of Iran's program.

## United States

### United States

#### [At Earth Day Climate Summit, Biden Pushes for Sharp Cut to Greenhouse-Gas Emissions](#)

April 22, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

President Biden sought to assert U.S. leadership in global climate talks, committing to a sharp reduction in the nation's greenhouse-gas emissions at a summit that drew promises from other world leaders to take action and calls for rich nations to shoulder more responsibility.

#### [Climate crisis threatens U.S. national security, Defense secretary says](#)

April 22, 2021, CNBC

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin described the climate crisis as one of the nation's existential threats with the potential to profoundly destabilize global security.

#### [Blinken warns US is falling behind China in race to capitalize on climate opportunities](#)

April 19, 2021, CNN

US Secretary of State Tony Blinken said that "coming up short" in efforts to address climate change "will have major repercussions" for US national security and its economy, warning that the country is falling behind China on renewable energy and pushing for greater investment in green technologies.

#### [U.S. working to add \\$300 million in civilian aid to Afghanistan: Blinken](#)

April 21, 2021, WSAU

The Biden administration is working with Congress to provide an additional \$300 million in civilian assistance to Afghanistan, U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said.

#### [Blinken calls on Jaishankar, reaffirms US-India cooperation](#)

April 23, 2021, ANI

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and reaffirmed the importance of the US-India relationship while agreeing to coordinate closely to establish peace in Afghanistan and restoration of democracy in Myanmar.

[U.S. imposes additional sanctions on Myanmar, targeting two companies linked to the country's military](#)

April 21, 2021, The New York Times

American officials announced new sanctions on Myanmar in the wake of the recent military coup, targeting two state-owned businesses with connections to the armed forces as part of an escalating international effort to jolt the country back onto a democratic path.

[Blinken to participate in G-7 foreign minister meeting in London next month](#)

April 20, 2021, The Hill

The U.S. is invited to attend an in-person meeting with the foreign ministers of the Group of Seven (G-7) countries in London next month, the first such meeting in two years.

[Biden's everything Doctrine](#)

April 22, 2021, Foreign Affairs

So far, the Biden administration has, at least rhetorically, insisted that it can pursue all its objectives without making sacrifices or encountering tensions. Such a foreign policy of broad commitment is no longer sustainable.

[China, Russia deepen cooperation in what could be Biden's defining challenge as president](#)

April 18, 2021, CNBC

This past week, Russia and China simultaneously escalated their separate military activities and threats to the sovereignty of Ukraine and Taiwan respectively – countries whose vibrant independence is an affront to Moscow and Beijing but lies at the heart of U.S. and allies' interests in their regions. Even if Moscow's and Beijing's actions do not result in a military invasion of either country, and most experts still believe that is unlikely, the scale and intensity of the military moves demand immediate attention. U.S. and allied officials dare not dismiss the certainty that Russia and China are sharing intelligence or the growing likelihood that they increasingly are coordinating actions and strategies.

## Europe & Russia

### Europe

#### [UK parliament declares genocide in China's Xinjiang; Beijing condemns move](#)

April 23, 2021, Reuters

Britain's parliament called for the government to take action to end what lawmakers described as genocide in China's Xinjiang region, stepping up pressure on ministers to go further in their criticism of Beijing.

#### [EU parliament agrees to April 27 vote on EU-UK trade deal](#)

April 22, 2021, Reuters

The European Parliament will vote on a post-Brexit trade deal agreed between Britain and the EU next after political leaders backed down on a threat not to ratify the accord due to British changes in Northern Ireland trading arrangements.

#### [Japan to host first joint military drill with US, France](#)

April 23, 2021, France24

Japan will hold a joint military drill with US and French troops in the country's southwest next month, the defence minister said, as China's actions in regional waters raise concern.

#### [With eye on Islamist fight, France backs Chad military takeover](#)

April 22, 2021, Reuters

France defended the Chadian army's takeover of power after the battlefield death of President Idriss Deby presented Paris with an uncomfortable choice - back an unconstitutional military leader or risk undermining its fight against Islamists.

#### [De-coupling from China would be the wrong way to go, Germany warns](#)

April 22, 2021, Reuters

The European Union needs to engage with China despite many differences instead of opting for a more isolationist approach, Germany said.

#### [EU preparing legal case against AstraZeneca over vaccine shortfalls](#)

April 21, 2021, Politico

The European Commission is getting ready to launch legal proceedings against vaccine producer AstraZeneca, according to six EU diplomats.

### [EU reaches major climate deal ahead of Biden climate summit](#)

April 22, 2021, Associated Press

The European Union has reached a tentative climate deal to put the 27-nation bloc on a path to being "climate neutral" by 2050, with member states and parliament agreeing on binding targets for carbon emissions on the eve of a virtual summit hosted by U.S. President Joe Biden.

### [Europe Proposes Strict Rules for Artificial Intelligence](#)

April 21, 2021, The New York Times

The European Union unveiled strict regulations to govern the use of artificial intelligence, a first-of-its-kind policy that outlines how companies and governments can use a technology seen as one of the most significant, but ethically fraught, scientific breakthroughs in recent memory.

### [Swiss president heads for damage-control EU summit](#)

April 22, 2021, Reuters

Swiss President Guy Parmelin heads to Brussels for a summit with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen over a stalled treaty that threatens to put ties between Switzerland and its biggest trading partner into a deep freeze.

## **Russia**

### [Russia Plans to Withdraw From ISS, Deploy Its Own National Space Station](#)

April 18, 2021, Sputnik News

Russia will exit the International Space Station (ISS) initiative in 2025 and will inform its international partners about that decision, Deputy Prime Minister Yury Borisov told broadcaster Rossiya 1. According to the TV channel, the decision to withdraw was made during a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on 12 April.

### [Russia becomes member of International Organization for Migration](#)

April 19, 2021, TASS News Agency

Russia has adopted the Constitution of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and become its full-fledged member. A corresponding official notification signed by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was handed over by his deputy, Sergei Vershinin, to IOM Director General Antonio Vitorino.

### [In Quotes: Putin Speaks on State of the Nation](#)

April 21, 2021, The Moscow Times

Russian President Vladimir Putin is addressing the nation in the annual speech to the Federal Assembly as tensions brew at home and abroad. The Russian president's address to lawmakers and regional heads comes hours before planned nationwide protests in support of hunger-striking Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, whose failing health in prison has drawn worldwide concern.

### [Russia Orders Troops Back To Permanent Bases After Drills In Annexed Crimea](#)

April 22, 2021, RFE/RL

Moscow says it has ordered its troops to start returning to their permanent bases following extensive military drills in southern Russia and in and around the occupied Ukrainian region of Crimea, which Moscow annexed in March 2014. The April 22 announcement comes amid heightened tensions with the West over Russia's major military buildup around the areas of eastern Ukraine.

### [Putin Offers to Meet Ukraine President in Moscow 'Any Time'](#)

April 22, 2021, The Moscow Times

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky was welcome in Moscow "any time" but stressed that he should discuss the conflict in eastern Ukraine with separatists directly. "If we are talking about bilateral relations, then, by all means, we are ready to welcome the president of Ukraine at any time that is convenient for him," the Russian leader said during a meeting with Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko in Moscow.

### [Navalny Expresses 'Pride And Hope' After Protests As Concerns About His Health Mount](#)

April 22, 2021, RFE/RL

Imprisoned Russian opposition leader Aleksei Navalny has expressed "pride and hope" after nationwide demonstrations calling for his release amid reports his health is deteriorating. In a post to Instagram on April 22, Navalny called the thousands of Russians who took to the streets the previous day "the salvation of Russia."

### [Russian missile cruiser Admiral Nakhimov to become world's strongest warship after upgrade](#)

April 22, 2021, TASS News Agency

The heavy nuclear-powered missile cruiser Admiral Nakhimov will turn into the world's strongest surface combatant after its upgrade, CEO of the Severnoye Design Bureau (part of the United Shipbuilding Corporation) Andrei Dyachkov told TASS on the occasion of the company's 75th anniversary.



[Czech Republic set to order all but 5 of Russia's diplomats out of country in escalating tit-for-tat over spying & sabotage claims](#)

April 22, 2021, Russia Today

The Czech Republic has warned that as many as 22 Russian envoys and 48 support staff could soon be sent home in the wake of a growing row over allegations Moscow's intelligence agencies blew up an ammunition depot in the country. The nation's new foreign minister, Jakub Kulganek, told reporters that Prague would order the expulsions if Russia did not reverse its own ban on 20 Czech diplomats.

## Africa & Latin America

### Latin America

#### [Raúl Castro in favor of dialogue with US in one of his last appearances as Communist Party leader](#)

17 April 2021, MercoPress

Iconic Cuban Revolution leader Raúl Castro opened the Cuban Communist Party convention which marked the end of his days as First Secretary by making it clear nobody had forced him to make that decision and he supported a closer dialogue with giant neighbours the United States.

#### [Uruguayan President seizes Pfizer vaccines Argentine neglected, press reports](#)

17 April 2021, MercoPress

Uruguay's President Luis Lacalle Pou successfully carried out a personal negotiation with the Pfizer laboratory in Buenos Aires in December as talks between the Argentine government and the manufacturers of the vaccine began to stall, it was reported.

#### [Uruguay leads freedom of press in South America; Brazil falls down to red zone in RSF ratings](#)

20 April 2021, MercoPress

With no South American country among the top 12, the Non-Government Organization Reporters Without Borders (RSF - the acronym for Reporters sans frontières) lowered Brazil's freedom of the press rankings to 111th, thus placing it within the red zone.

#### [Argentine President calls for international treaty on pandemics to boost WHO's role](#)

22 April 2021, MercoPress

Argentine President Alberto Fernández called all countries to reinforce the role of the World Health Organization (WHO) "through an international treaty on pandemics."

#### [Colombia, South Korea strengthen bilateral relations during Seoul envoy trip to Bogota](#)

21 April 2021, MercoPress

During his Bogota stop, South Korea's First Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong-Kun expressed his country's concerns over Japan's intentions to release the contaminated water into the Pacific Ocean from the wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant, the Asian nation's Foreign Ministry announced in a statement.

### [Russian, Argentine officials strengthen bilateral cooperation](#)

20 April 2021, Prensa Latina

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov and a delegation from the Argentine government led by Economy Minister Martin Guzman analyzed options for strengthening bilateral cooperation, it was reported in Moscow. During the meeting in this capital, the two sides reviewed the current state of the economic relations between the two nations, as well as the Russian-Argentine interaction with multilateral organizations, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlighted.

## **AFRICA**

### [Eritrea confirms military presence in Ethiopia in UNSC letter](#)

17 April 2021, Africa Times

The Eritrean government acknowledged for the first time that its troops are active in the Tigray conflict zone in northern Ethiopia, in a letter from Sophia Tesfamariam, the Eritrean ambassador to the United Nations.

### [Déby dies in Chad following provisional re-election](#)

20 April 2021, Africa Times

President Idriss Déby of Chad has died following injuries sustained during fighting in the country's north, according to a state spokesman. The longtime leader of Chad died following wounds inflicted at the weekend, according to Gen. Azem Bermandoa Agouna in an announcement on state television. The death was quickly confirmed by Agence France-Presse, RFI and other international media services.

### [Coronavirus: Ngozi, Diop & Tedros unite to break the vaccine deadlock in Africa](#)

19 April 2021, The Africa Report

WTO, IFC, WHO... Africans at the helm of the world's largest international institutions have called for greater solidarity in the global distribution of vaccines at the 2021 Spring Meetings of the World Bank and IMF.

### [Africa's debt dance with China in creating the Belt Road Initiative](#)

21 April 2021, The Africa Report

With more than half of the 60-plus recipient countries under China's Belt Road Initiative (BRI) located in Africa, it's hard to not commend the Chinese for their willingness to make significant investments to develop infrastructure on the continent. However, it is the debt financing terms between the African

governments and the Chinese government that are seen as particularly egregious. At present, the countries in Africa with the largest Chinese debt are Angola (\$25bn), Ethiopia (\$13.5bn), Zambia (\$7.4bn), the Republic of Congo (\$7.3bn), and Sudan (6.4bn).

[China eyes more bases in Africa, according to the US military](#)

22 April 2021, Voa News

U.S. forces in Africa are keeping a watchful eye on China, worried Beijing is getting closer to establishing a network of military and naval bases across the continent.

"We know the Chinese desire a network of bases around the globe," the head of U.S. Africa Command, General Stephen Townsend, told lawmakers, adding, "My concern is the greatest along the Atlantic coast of Africa."



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