



# 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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## DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH Volume V, Issue 23

### 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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## South Asia

### India

#### [Navy's Only Nuclear Attack Submarine Returns To Russia Before Lease Expires](#)

June 4, 2021, NDTV

The unexpected emergence of the Indian Navy's only nuclear-powered attack submarine, the INS Chakra, in the waters of the Singapore Straits heralds the end of her service in the Indian Navy.

#### [Govt okays Rs 43,000 cr order to procure six submarines](#)

June 5, 2021, The Economic Times

The defence ministry has cleared a two-decade-old plan to procure six conventional submarines with the ability to stay underwater for weeks. The order will create competition that will involve defence sector giant Larsen and Toubro and public owned Mazagaon Dockyards Limited.

#### [Indian Navy's oldest hydrographic survey ship INS Sandhayak decommissioned after 40 years of service](#)

June 4, 2021, India Today

Indian Navy's oldest hydrographic survey ship INS Sandhayak was decommissioned on Friday at Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam after serving the nation for 40 glorious years.

#### [India's EAM Jaishankar to visit Kuwait next week](#)

June 4, 2021, WION

India's external affairs minister Dr S Jaishankar will visit Kuwait next week, as the country steps in to help India amid the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

#### [India issues another ban on 108 imported arms](#)

June 3, 2021, Defense News

India has issued its second arms embargo list of 108 weapons, systems and platforms, which the Ministry of Defence describes as its "Second Positive Indigenisation List." The move is part of India's effort to achieve self-reliance and promote defense exports.

#### [Lessons from Pakistan: how to win friends, influence allies, then squander it all](#)

June 1, 2021, The Indian Express

It is widely assumed that the pursuit of "strategic autonomy" is a unique attribute of Indian foreign policy. The fact, however, is that all countries, big or

small, try and maximise their room for manoeuvre within the constraints that they find themselves in. Let us consider the case of Pakistan.

#### ['Talks on with US firms to source jabs': Shringla](#)

June 4, 2021, Hindustan Times

India is in talks with US pharmaceutical giants Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson about sourcing and possible local manufacturing of their Covid-19 vaccines even as it awaits WHO approval for the indigenous Covaxin vaccine, foreign secretary Harsh Shringla said .

#### [Disengagement process along LAC remains unfinished: India](#)

June 3, 2021, India Today

The process of disengagement along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) remains unfinished and its early completion in the remaining areas could lead to de-escalation of forces in eastern Ladakh, which could pave the way for full restoration of peace and tranquillity, India said.

#### [LAC face-off: How Galwan clashes 'profoundly disturbed' India- China ties](#)

May 30, 2021, The Times of India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy was put to the test a year after he assumed office for his second term when a violent clash erupted between Indian and Chinese troops in May 2020.

## **Pakistan**

#### [Shifting blame on Pakistan to 'save face' amid US withdrawal from Afghanistan unacceptable: Moeed](#)

June 4, 2021, Dawn

National Security Adviser Dr Moeed Yusuf said that the sudden withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan was not ideal, adding that any shifting of blame on Pakistan for "face saving" would be unacceptable.

#### [In budget, Biden administration seeks economic support for Pakistan](#)

May 30, 2021, Dawn

In its first budget, for fiscal year 2022, the Biden administration also seeks money for providing economic and social support to Pakistan and for training Pakistani military personnel.

### [PM Imran visits National Command Authority, reposes trust in Pakistan's nuclear capability](#)

May 30, 2021, Dawn

Prime Minister Imran Khan visited a nuclear facility managed by Army's Strategic Forces Command, according to a statement issued by the PM's Office. The visit, although a day after the observance of the 23rd anniversary of the 1998 nuclear tests, appeared to be linked to that occasion.

### [Russia, Pakistan agree to build gas pipeline](#)

May 29, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan and Russia signed an inter-government agreement (IGA) to develop Pakistan Stream Gas Pipeline for gas transportation from Karachi to Kasur. Russian Energy Minister Nikolai Shulginov and Pakistan's ambassador in Moscow Shafqat Ali Khan signed a protocol on the amendments to the IGA on North-South Gas Pipeline Project in Moscow, according to the Pakistan Embassy in Russia.

### [Pakistan-Egypt joint air defence exercise 'Sky Guards-1' concludes](#)

June 4, 2021, The Express Tribune

The final phase of the live firing exercise and closing ceremony of the Pakistan-Egypt Joint Air Defence Exercise 'Sky Guards-1' held in Cairo, Egypt. Pakistan Army Air Defence, Pakistan Air Force Air Defence and Egyptian Air Defence Forces participated in the first-ever exercise of this kind.

### [Afghan drawdown entails 'security challenges', warns FM](#)

June 3, 2021, The Express Tribune

Pakistan warned that the US and NATO forces' withdrawal from Afghanistan after a 20-year long military campaign entailed "serious security challenges" but stressed that the move also offered a "unique opportunity" for peace and reconciliation.

### [Pakistan proposes new framework for ties with Iraq](#)

May 30, 2021, The Express Tribune

Islamabad proposed a new framework at the foreign ministers' level between Pakistan and Iraq to deepen bilateral cooperation, after Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi's talks with Iraqi leadership in Baghdad. Qureshi was on a three-day visit to Iraq where he held talks with both the Iraqi President and the Prime minister, an official handout issued by the Foreign Office said. The discussions focused on how to deepen bilateral cooperation in different fields.

### [Pakistan, Tajikistan sign 12 MoUs in diverse areas](#)

June 3, 2021, The News

The Tajik president and the prime minister also signed a joint declaration on next steps in building strategic partnership for regional solidarity and integration. Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon expressed his country's interest to access Pakistan's Gwadar and Karachi seaports as the 'shortest trade route' for the landlocked Central Asian state to connect with the region.

### [Qureshi, Iraqi ministers discuss mutual ties, cooperation](#)

May 31, 2021, The News

Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Iraq's Minister of Interior Othman Ali Farhood Moshir Al-Ghanimi and Minister of Defence of Iraq Jumaa Inad Saadoun Khattab agreed on the need to exchange delegations with a view to enhancing cooperation in security matters, counter narcotics and visa facilitation.

### [Pakistan stops official contact with Afghan NSA](#)

May 30, 2021, The News

Pakistan has conveyed to the leadership in Afghanistan it will no longer conduct official business with Kabul's top national security chief because of his recent "abusive outburst" against Islamabad, highly placed officials and diplomatic sources confirmed to a foreign media outlet.

## **Afghanistan**

### [Afghanistan blames Pakistan for violating deal on air travel](#)

May 31, 2021, Anadolu Agency

The aviation authorities in Afghanistan blamed Pakistan for unilaterally and arbitrarily cutting up to 80% flights of an Afghan airliner shuttling passengers between the two neighbors. According to the Afghanistan Aviation Authority, Islamabad has cut the Kam Air flights from Islamabad to Kabul by 80%, citing the coronavirus pandemic.

### [Turkey to run Kabul international airport in deal with NATO](#)

June 2, 2021, The National

The Turkish government has agreed to take over responsibility for Kabul's international airport in a \$130 million deal with NAO, an Afghan government official told The National. The deal is likely to be widely welcomed after weeks of uncertainty over the Turkish government's continued commitment to defending Hamid Karzai International Airport

## [Security Situation in Afghanistan Remains Challenging: NATO Chief](#)

June 1, 2021, Tolo News

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said that the security situation in Afghanistan remains “very difficult and challenging,” reiterating that as the US and coalition forces are leaving, at some stage, Afghans should take full responsibility for their own future.

## [China, Afghanistan, Pakistan reaches 8-point consensus on promoting Afghanistan's peace process](#)

June 4, 2021, CGTN

On June 3, 2021, China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi hosted the fourth trilateral dialogue via video link with Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammad Haneef Atmar and Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. According to the Chinese Foreign Minister, the three foreign ministers held a harmonious and friendly dialogue with in-depth and fruitful discussions and reached eight-point consensus.

## **Bangladesh**

### [Bangladesh leaves India behind in per capita income](#)

June 3, 2021, Deccan Herald

India— eternally confident about being the only South Asian economy that matters— now must grapple with the fact that it, too, is poorer than Bangladesh in per capita terms. India’s per capita income in 2020-21 was a mere \$1,947.

### [Bangladeshis hold demonstrations in Dhaka to mark Tiananmen massacre anniversary](#)

June 4, 2021, Hindustan Times

People in Bangladesh gathered outside a mosque in Dhaka to commemorate the 32nd anniversary of the Tiananmen massacre. On Friday, the demonstrators held candlelight vigils and shouted slogans outside Dhaka’s Baitul Mukarram Mosque. One of the banners used during the candlelight visit read “Genocide Day”.



## **Nepal**

### [Defence relations between India and Nepal](#)

June 4, 2021, Financial Express

The relationship between the Nepali Army and the Indian Army is the cornerstone of otherwise excellent relations between these two countries. A large number of officers and men of the Nepal Army undergo professional military courses in India. Further, a large number also have close relations (both serving and retired) with their kith and kin who serve or have served in the Indian Army.

### [Nepal all set to sign fertiliser supply deal with India](#)

June 5, 2021, The Kathmandu Post

Nepal is all set to sign a long-term chemical fertiliser supply deal with India following the cabinet's in principle approval this week in a move to avoid recurring shortages during the peak growing season.

## **Sri Lanka**

### [China's Sri Lankan port grab adds a pearl to its string](#)

May 30, 2021, Live MInt

On 20 May, the Sri Lankan parliament passed the Colombo Port City Economic Commission Bill that lays out the country's legal framework governing the China-financed project built on land reclaimed from the Sri Lankan capital's seafront, adjoining Colombo's port. The bill effectively turns these 660 acres into Chinese sovereign territory.

### [Cargo Ship Carrying Tonnes Of Chemicals Sinks Off Sri Lanka](#)

June 3, 2021, NDTV

A cargo ship carrying tonnes of chemicals sank off Sri Lanka's west coast, its navy said on Wednesday, and tonnes of plastic pellets have fouled the country's rich fishing waters in one of its worst-ever marine disasters.

### [Will India-Sri Lanka Trade Suffer Due to China's Grip On Colombo?](#)

June 3, 2021, The Quint

At a time when Indian Coast Guard ships were helping the Sri Lankan navy battle a disastrous fire on the container ship MV X Press Pearl, the Parliament was clearing a bill to set up a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in the Colombo Port City (CPC), and more importantly, the terms of reference on an Economic Commission to govern it – both of which would give China an even larger stake in the island.

## East & South East Asia

### China

#### [Xi calls for unprecedented efforts to improve global environmental governance](#)

June 5, 2021, Global Times

Chinese President Xi Jinping said that the international community should work together with unprecedented ambition and action to strive for a fair and reasonable system of global environmental governance featuring win-win cooperation and promote the sustainable development of humanity.

#### [Third-child policy, robotics, to ensure unceasing economic growth](#)

June 5, 2021, Global Times

China's central government has moved to revise the country's population policy by allowing couples to give birth to three children, and at the same time, pledging to invest more resources to improve parenting and reduce the cost of education. The new policy, meted out just prior to June 1, the International Children's Day, is to stabilize the country's labour force and to buttress continuous rapid economic growth.

#### [China is ready to help India and other S Asian countries fighting COVID-19: CPAFFC president](#)

June 3, 2021, Global Times

China has the willingness, capacity and resources to help India and other South Asian countries that are grappling with the new wave of COVID-19 cases, said the president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC).

#### [Li: Beijing to strengthen cooperation with Hanoi](#)

June 5, 2021, China Daily

Bilateral cooperation, particularly the joint fight against COVID-19, was a major highlight of Premier Li Keqiang's telephone conversation with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh.

#### [Beijing slams Biden's curbs on firms](#)

June 5, 2021, China Daily

China on Friday expressed opposition to United States President Joe Biden's expansion of restrictions on investments in certain Chinese companies and vowed to take necessary measures to safeguard the legitimate rights of Chinese enterprises.

### [FM urges Kabul to boost ties with its neighbours](#)

June 5, 2021, China Daily

State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said China, Afghanistan and Pakistan should jointly urge the United States to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan in a responsible and orderly manner to prevent the deterioration of the security situation there and the return of terrorist forces.

### [Xi calls on SCO to expand people-to-people exchanges](#)

June 4, 2021, China Daily

President Xi Jinping has called on all parties of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to uphold the Shanghai Spirit, stay committed to their original aspirations, help each other in the same boat and deepen their cooperation.

### [China takes top spot as import source for UK](#)

June 4, 2021, China Daily

The latest statistics show that China has replaced Germany to become Britain's biggest source of imports for the first time since modern records began in 1997.

## **Japan**

### [Japan To Extend \\$14.8 Million Emergency Aid To India](#)

May 31, 2021, NDTV

The Government of Japan decided to extend Emergency Grant Aid of approximately 14.8 million US dollars to India in response to the current surge of COVID-19 infections in India, Japan's foreign ministry said in a statement.

### [Cabinet gives nod to India-Japan MoC on urban development](#)

June 2, 2021, The Times of India

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a memorandum of cooperation (MoC) will be signed between the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan in suppression of an existing MoU of 2007 on urban development.

### [India's suspect 'Quad' credentials](#)

June 5, 2021, The Japan Times

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's carefully cultivated competence bubble has been punctured by his government's ineffectiveness amid the second wave of the COVID-19 virus that has ravaged his country. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue process brings together Japan, Australia, India and the United States as an informal grouping of

democracies to cooperate around the vast and critical Indo-Pacific maritime space.

#### [Japan enters Taiwan-China fight with Covid-19 vaccine shipments to Taipei](#)

June 4, 2021, Business Standard

Japan announced it was sending some of its Covid-19 vaccines to Taiwan, which has been struggling to procure its own supplies and blamed China for impeding shipments of the shots.

#### [US, Japan reaffirm alliance amid China territorial claims](#)

June 1, 2021, The Times of India

The new head of the US Indo-Pacific Command held talks with top Japanese officials on Tuesday and reaffirmed their alliance amid China's increasingly assertive claims to contested areas in the region, officials said.

#### [Reagan integrates with Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force](#)

June 3, 2021, Navy Times

The aircraft carrier Ronald Reagan and its carrier strike group completed integrated operations with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force in the Philippine Sea.

### **Korea**

#### [Upcoming joint exercise with South Korea, Japan is frequently held drill: Pentagon spokesman](#)

June 5, 2021, The Korea Times

The upcoming joint air force exercise with South Korea and Japan is routine training that is held "very frequently" and is aimed at enhancing their joint defence capability, a U.S. Department of Defence official said.

#### [Moon visits Korea's spy agency for briefing on its reform steps](#)

June 4, 2021, The Korea Times

President Moon Jae-in visited the headquarters of South Korea's state spy agency in southern Seoul and received a briefing on its reform measures.

#### [Korean firms in quandary over Vietnam's 'vaccine fund' request](#)

June 4, 2021, The Korea Times

Korean companies and state-run institutions operating in Vietnam are facing a dilemma due to the Southeast Asian country's request to contribute to the launch of a "vaccine fund."

[UN may probe possible sanctions violations by South Korean firms involving oil tanker transfer to North Korea](#)

June 4, 2021, The Korea Times

The United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committee on North Korea may begin investigating allegations that at least two oil tankers previously owned by S. Korean companies were transferred to North Korea, which is a violation of U.N. sanctions on Pyongyang.

[North Korean leader presides over politburo meeting in first public appearance in a month](#)

June 5, 2021, The Korea Times

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un presided over a politburo session of the Workers' Party in his first public appearance in a month and discussed convening a key party meeting and organizational matters, the North's state media reported.

[Kim Jong-un's disappearance from public view stokes speculation](#)

June 4, 2021, The Korea Herald

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's monthlong disappearance from state media has fuelled speculation over his whereabouts, as it marked his longest absence this year.

[British PM expects S. Korea to play a role in G7 summit next week: Cheong Wa Dae](#)

June 3, 2021, The Korea Herald

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Thursday welcomed South Korea's commitment to playing a role in an upcoming summit of global leaders on COVID-19, climate change and other pending issues, Cheong Wa Dae said.

## **Southeast Asia**

[China 'remiss' as bilateral partner to PH, party to UNCLOS, envoys say](#)

June 2, 2021, CNN Philippines

China has been "remiss" in its obligations as a bilateral partner to the Philippines and as a state party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, two Filipino envoys said.

[China sends 16 military aircraft over disputed South China Sea shoals near Malaysia](#)

May 2, 2021, Defense News

China has sent more than a dozen military transport aircraft to the vicinity of disputed shoals in the South China Sea administered by Malaysia, prompting the latter to scramble a fighter jet to investigate.

[China says its air force activities over South China Sea were 'routine training'](#)

June 2, 2021, CGTN

Chinese air force activities over the South China Sea were routine training exercises, targeting no specific country, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin stressed.

[South China Sea: Chinese warplanes near Malaysia 'aimed at showing dominance'](#)

June 5, 2021, SCMP

China's military aircraft manoeuvre over contested waters off the Malaysian coast is probably aimed at showing its growing ability to assert its territorial claims against those of its neighbours, an observer said.

[Malaysia scrambles jets to intercept Chinese planes in South China Sea](#)

June 1, 2021, WION

The Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) on Tuesday scrambled Hawk jets after it identified 16 People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) planes heading towards its airspace.

[Eyes on China as British Aircraft Carrier Group Heads to South Sea for Military Drill](#)

June 4, 2021, VOA

A British-led aircraft carrier group voyage that will take the HMS Queen Elizabeth to the disputed South China Sea would push Beijing further into an angry defensive position, analysts believe.

[Chinese think tank says there's been 'huge increase' in US spy plane flights over South China Sea](#)

June 4, 2021, SCMP

The United States conducted 72 reconnaissance flights over the South China Sea in May, maintaining a constant presence over the disputed waters, a Beijing-based think tank said.

## Central & West Asia

### Central Asia

#### [Pakistan, Uzbekistan Trade Goods Via Afghanistan In Landmark First](#)

May 31, 2021, RFE/RL

Pakistan and Uzbekistan have exchanged goods through war-torn Afghanistan for the first time, in a move hailed as a milestone for regional economic integration. The project has received technical and financial support from the United States Agency for International Development. The agency said the initiative is intended to "boost regional trade integration and connectivity."

#### [Tajikistan shares irrigation water with Kazakhstan](#)

June 02, 2021, Eurasianet

This week, the mountain nation of Tajikistan agreed to divert 315 million cubic meters from its Bahri Tojik reservoir to Kazakhstan, thereby supplying its neighbor to the north with crucial irrigation water in the hot months of summer. The water will be delivered via Kyrgyzstan to Kazakhstan's Turkestan and Kyzylorda regions.

#### [Former Member Of Banned Tajik Opposition Party Jailed On Extremism Charge](#)

June 02, 2021, RFE/RL

A former member of the banned Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), who quit his political activities years ago, has been sentenced to five years in prison for being "a member of a banned extremist organization." A court in the northern Tajik city of Khujand pronounced the verdict and sentencing of Mirzo Hojimuhammad, also known as Mirzoqul Hojimatov, on June 1.

#### [Kyrgyzstan: Ex-PM sent to pretrial detention in corruption case](#)

June 03, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

A court in Bishkek has ordered former Kyrgyz Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov be held in pretrial detention for two months. Babanov and at least four other prominent politicians were detained earlier this week as part of a corruption investigation connected to the Central Asian country's largest gold mine, Kumtor.

#### [Tajikistan, Pakistan Sign Accords To Improve Bilateral Relations, Defense Ties](#)

June 03, 2021, RFE/RL

Tajikistan and Pakistan have signed several accords to boost ties between the two nations, including defence and armaments. "It is very important that our

defense cooperation develops," Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan said after the June 2 meeting. He did not comment further, nor did Tajik President Emomali Rahmon.

#### [Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan boost bilateral trade](#)

June 04, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

The Kazakh Minister of Trade and Integration met with the Uzbek Deputy Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade to discuss strengthening trade relations between the countries. The parties discussed in detail the implementation of the Action Plan for organizing the activities of the International Center for Trade and Economic Cooperation "Central Asia", signed by the Prime Ministers of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan on April 10, 2021.

### **West Asia**

#### [Saudi Arabia Committed to Meet India's Crude Oil Requirement: Saudi Ambassador](#)

May 30, 2021, Business Standard

Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter said it is committed to meet India's requirements of petroleum products, an affirmation that came in the wake of the country pitching for easing global output cuts to rein in surging oil prices.

#### [Qatar Airways Keen to Partner when India's IndiGo Goes Long Haul](#)

May 05, 2021, Zawya

Qatar Airways is training its sights on India's huge aviation market. Al Baker, CEO of Qatar Airways said the Gulf Carrier is ready to partner with IndiGo when the latter decides to go long haul.

#### [Iran-backed Militias Turn to Drone Attacks, Alarming U.S. Forces in Iraq](#)

May 29, 2021, The Washington Post

U.S. military officials in Iraq have grown increasingly alarmed over attacks by Iran-backed militias using drones to evade detection systems around military bases and diplomatic facilities.

#### [US Concerned over F-35 Sale to UAE Due to China Relations](#)

May 28, 2021, The Jerusalem Post

US intelligence agencies have expressed concern regarding the sale of the highly sophisticated F-35 fighter jet to the United Arab Emirates due to their ties to China.



### [Iran's Astan-e Quds Delivers 300 Ventilators to India](#)

May 29, 2021, Tehran Times

Ali Chegini, Iran's ambassador to New Delhi, said that "despite being imposed the most severe sanctions, Iran has fortunately reached a good stage in the production of high-tech medical equipment, and today could donate 300 high-quality ventilators to India."

### [Iran Approves 7 Candidates for June Presidential Elections](#)

May 25, 2021, Arab News

Iran's Ministry of Interior has confirmed seven candidates to run in June's presidential elections. The list of approved candidates by the Guardian Council, which is an unelected entity responsible for vetting candidates, includes judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi, who is said to be seen as the most likely to succeed the incumbent President Hassan Rouhani.

### [Round Five of Iran Nuclear Talks Opens in Vienna](#)

May 25, 2021, Voice of America

Talks between Iran and the world powers still adhering to the 2015 nuclear deal resumed in Vienna with the goal of bringing the United States back into the agreement.

### [China Backs Iran's 'Reasonable Demands' on Nuclear Deal](#)

May 24, 2021, Anadolu Agency

Beijing supports Tehran's "reasonable demands" regarding the Iran nuclear deal, China's president said. Xi Jinping extended the assurance during a phone call with his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani.

### [IAEA Chief: Iran's Uranium Enrichment now at Levels of 'Countries Making Bombs'](#)

May 26, 2021, The Times of Israel

The head of the United Nations nuclear watchdog has said Iran is enriching uranium to levels that only countries seeking to make atomic weapons reach, and that the Islamic Republic's nuclear program can no longer be returned to where it stood when a landmark 2015 deal was struck with world powers.

### [Iran, Hamas and Hezbollah Coordinated Gaza Fighting in Joint War Room – Report](#)

May 29, 2021, The Times of Israel

Ibrahim Al-Amine, editor of the pro-Hezbollah Lebanese daily Al-Akhbar, told Hezbollah's Al-Manar network over the weekend that during the 11-days of

fighting in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip, officers from the IRGC, Hamas and Hezbollah set up a joint military operations center in Beirut.

#### [India Abstains on UNHRC Resolution Proposing Probe in Gaza Violence](#)

May 28, 2021, The Indian Express

India abstained on a resolution at the UN Human Rights Council proposing to set up a Commission of Inquiry into violations surrounding the latest violence in Gaza, but also of "systematic" abuses in Palestinian territories and inside Israel.

#### [Israeli Opposition Parties Reach Agreement to Oust Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu](#)

May 31, 2021, The Washington Post

A diverse coalition of Israeli opposition parties said that they have the votes to form a unity government to unseat Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving leader and its dominant political figure for more than a decade.

#### [Syria's President Bashar al-Assad wins Fourth Term in office with 95.1 Percent of Votes](#)

May 28, 2021, AL Arabiya

Syria's President Bashar al-Assad won a fourth term in office with 95.1 percent of votes in an election that will extend his rule over a country ruined by war but which opponents and the West say was marked by fraud.

#### [Turkey Invokes Mahatma Gandhi and Rumi as It Delivers Covid-19 aid to India](#)

May 28, 2021, Hindustan Times

Turkey invoked Mahatma Gandhi and Sufi poet Jalaluddin Rumi as it delivered 50 tonnes of relief material, including five oxygen generators, to support India's response to a devastating second wave of coronavirus infections.

## United States

### United States

#### [How the U.S. will allocate its first 25 million COVID vaccine doses worldwide](#)

June 3, 2021, CBS News

The Biden administration announced on Thursday its plans to distribute the first 25 million of the 80 million vaccine doses the U.S. intends to send around the world.

#### [Jaishankar, Blinken discuss Covid-19 relief, Quad, Indo-Pacific cooperation](#)

May 29, 2021, Hindustan Times

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar in Washington and discussed a broad range of issues, including Covid-19 relief, efforts to strengthen Indo-Pacific cooperation through the Quad, told US State Department spokesperson Ned Price on Friday (local time).

#### [Blinken says Russia has an 'obligation' to stop ransomware attacks](#)

June 2, 2021, CNN

Secretary of State Antony Blinken told CNN Español Wednesday that Russia has an obligation to stop cyberattacks like those on the JBS meatpacking plant and the Colonial Pipeline and not "harbor criminal enterprises that engage in these attacks."

#### [Defense Secretary says US has 'offensive options' to respond to cyberattacks](#)

May 28, 2021, CNN

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told CNN the United States has "offensive options" to respond to cyberattacks following another major attack that is believed to have been carried out by the Russian group behind the SolarWinds hack.

#### [Biden Expands Blacklist of Chinese Companies Banned from U.S. Investment](#)

June 3, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

President Biden expanded a prohibition on Americans investing in Chinese companies with purported links to China's military, adding more businesses to a blacklist that has angered Beijing and caused consternation among investors.

[US secretary of state warns Pacific leaders about 'coercion' in veiled swipe at China](#)

June 2, 2021, The Guardian

The US secretary of state has warned leaders of Pacific countries about “threats to the rules-based international order” and “economic coercion”, in what appears to be a veiled swipe at China’s growing influence in the region.

[Gantz, Blinken meet to discuss Gaza reconstruction, other issues](#)

June 3, 2021, Times of Israel

Defence Minister Benny Gantz has arrived at the US State Department for a meeting with Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Blinken says the two will discuss the US commitment to Israel’s security, “the needs that Israel has on that regard,” humanitarian assistance to Gaza and reconstruction efforts in the coastal enclave, along with other issues.

[Blinken urges Central America to help on migrants, flags democracy concerns](#)

June 2, 2021, Reuters

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged Central American governments to do more to help contain illegal immigration and voiced concerns about the health of local democracy and human rights during a visit to the region on Tuesday.

## Europe & Russia

### Europe

#### [Europe Pushes Alternative to Waiving Patents on Covid-19 Vaccines](#)

June 3, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

The European Union is pushing back hard against U.S.-backed calls to temporarily waive intellectual property rights for Covid-19 vaccines, preparing a rival plan that officials said would better safeguard drug companies' patents and look for other ways to boost supplies for developing countries.

#### [EU bans Belarus airlines as opposition urges G7 sanctions](#)

June 4, 2021, Reuters

Belarus carriers will be banned from flying over European Union territory or having access to its airports from Friday, the bloc said, as the country's exiled opposition leader called for more joint Western sanctions.

#### [UK urges Australia to scale up climate ambition before G7 summit](#)

June 3, 2021, The Guardian

The top British envoy in Canberra has confirmed that the UK is encouraging Australia to increase its emission reduction target for the 2030s, indicating it is not enough for nations to commit to net zero by 2050.

#### [India, UK eye interim pact to help clinch major trade deal](#)

June 4, 2021, Mint

India and the U.K. are intensifying talks to remove non-tariff barriers and foster greater market access as they work to stitch together the South Asian nation's first major free trade pact in a decade.

#### [France to send India additional 16 oxygen-generating plants](#)

June 1, 2021, The Economic Times

France, has decided to enhance its medical support, including the proposed supply of 16 additional oxygen generating plants, to fight the Covid surge in the country.

#### [India, Germany hold bilateral consultations on UN issues](#)

June 4, 2021, ANI

India and Germany on Thursday held bilateral consultation during which both sides agreed to continue their engagement on key issues on the UN agenda.

### [Hungary blocks EU Hong Kong statement; Germany calls for change](#)

June 4, 2021, Deutsche Welle

The European Union must discuss ways of managing dissenting voices among its ranks, including qualified majority voting on foreign policy, according to Miguel Berger at the German Foreign Ministry.

### [US, UK, French navies agree to bolster joint operations, tech collaboration](#)

June 3, 2021, Defense News

The chiefs of the U.S., U.K. and French navies met in France on Thursday to affirm their commitment to deeper collaboration and interoperability between their fleets to address some of the most vexing maritime security issues around the globe.

## **Russia**

### [Russia may be cut off from SWIFT banking payment system as part of West's 'spiral of sanctions,' warns country's foreign ministry](#)

May 31, 2021, Russia Today

Russian banks may be blocked from using SWIFT, a payment system that enables reliable and secure financial transactions, as part of restrictions against Moscow, in what one official has called a potential "spiral of sanctions." "It's no secret that there are threats, primarily from the United States, to disconnect Russia from the SWIFT system," said Dmitry Biriuchevsky, director of the Economic Cooperation Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry.

### [Russia Bans Unauthorized 'Foreign Influence' Educational Activities](#)

June 01, 2021, The Moscow Times

Russia has banned non-state-approved educational activities and cooperation with foreign academics, according to highly criticized changes to Russia's education law. The law is based on the need cited by lawmakers for broad state power to permit or forbid activities outside formal academic settings. They said that the law was essential to counter "negative foreign influence in the educational process."

### [Russia Announces Arctic Military Drills in Further Sign of Increasing Presence](#)

June 01, 2021, RFE/RL

Russia says it will conduct strategic military drills in the Arctic this autumn, in another sign of the Kremlin's drive to assert its presence in the region. The command of Russia's Northern Fleet announced the "strategic military

exercise" on June 1 to check the "readiness of the forces and troops" serving in and around the Arctic.

### [Russia Widens Opposition Crackdown with Bill, Jailing of Critic](#)

June 02, 2021, The Moscow Times

Russian authorities widened a crackdown on the country's beleaguered opposition as the legislature advanced a bill that would bar opponents from polls and a court jailed another well-known Kremlin critic. Russia's opposition says authorities are stepping up a campaign of intimidation against dissenters ahead of a parliamentary vote in September, allegations the Kremlin has rejected.

### [Kremlin doubts that Russian-US summit may produce joint document](#)

June 02, 2021, TASS News Agency

Russia doubts that the forthcoming summit meeting between President Vladimir Putin and his US counterpart Joe Biden may produce some joint document, presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov told the media. "For the time being "there are no agreed documents," he added.

### [Russia Will Soon Denounce 'Open Lands' Deal on Diplomatic Travel With US, Diplomat Says](#)

June 02, 2021, Sputnik News

The Russian government will soon issue a decree to denounce the memorandum on diplomatic travel and send some other signals that the United States will consider unpleasant, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov announced. The deputy foreign minister emphasised that the "uncomfortable signals" were not related to the upcoming top-level talks.

### [Two Russian Cosmonauts Take Spacewalk At International Space Station](#)

June 02, 2021, RFE/RL

Two Russian cosmonauts have exited the International Space Station (ISS) for a spacewalk to prepare for the arrival of a new Russian module. The June 2 spacewalk, expected to last about 6 1/2 hours, is the first for both Oleg Novitsky and Pyotr Dubrov, who have been on the ISS since April.

### [Diplomat strikes back at untrue claims Russia 'restricting' rights of foreign agent media](#)

June 03, 2021, TASS News Agency

Journalists working for media outlets considered foreign agents have the same rights as reporters from other companies, and claims that Russia is restricting their activity are untrue.

## Africa & Latin America

### Latin America

#### [Argentina to launch local production of Sputnik V vaccine, but subject to availability of active ingredient](#)

June 4, 2021, MercoPress

Presidents Alberto Fernández of Argentina and Vladimir Putin of Russia are to launch the beginning of local production in the South American country of the Sputnik V vaccine. According to sources from the Argentine Government, manufacturing could start as early as next week with output foreseen at 500,000 doses every seven days.

#### [Chile stops 2nd dose of AstraZeneca vaccine as case of thrombosis detected](#)

June 4, 2021, MercoPress

Chilean health authorities decided to halt until further notice the anti-covid-19 vaccination of people under 45 years of age with the second dose of the Oxford-AstraZeneca immunizer following the occurrence of one case of thrombosis and thrombocytopenia.

#### [Argentina and Cuba to join forces against the coronavirus pandemic](#)

May 29, 2021, MercoPress

Health authorities of Cuba and Argentina announced their mutual commitment to strengthening cooperative relations in biotechnology to improve the quality of life of people in both countries, it was announced.

#### [Argentina's trade with Brazil at its highest since 2018](#)

June 29, 2021, MercoPress

A report released showed that Argentina's trade with neighbour Brazil has reached its highest level since 2018, exports reaching US \$ 4.2 billion until May, 33% better than in the first five months of last year, but 6% lower than the same period of 2019.

#### [OECD foresees Argentina's economy will recover but still below pre-pandemic levels](#)

June 29, 2021, MercoPress

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) forecast that Argentina's economy will expand in 2021 and 2022, but will nonetheless remain way below pre-pandemic levels, according to its semi-annual report on World Economic Outlook released Monday in Paris.



## **Africa**

### [Nigeria bans Twitter use after Buhari flagged for violation](#)

June 29, 2021, Africa Times

Nigeria has suspended the use of Twitter across the country, just days after a tweet posted by President Muhammadu Buhari was removed for what the social media platform said was a violation of its rules.

### [Africans to get 5 million COVID vaccine doses from U.S.](#)

June 3, 2021, Africa Times

African nations can expect 5 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine from the United States, according to U.S. President Joe Biden. The commitment was announced as part of a U.S. plan to send vaccines to low-income nations still waiting for lifesaving medicine.

### [France – Mali: Paris suspends joint military operations with Bamako](#)

June 4, 2021, The African Report

In response to Colonel Assimi Goïta's power grab, Paris has announced the temporary suspension of its military cooperation with Mali. The gesture says a lot about France's perception of Assimi Goïta's power grab in Mali. On 3 June, the French Ministry of Defence announced the temporary suspension of its military cooperation with the Malian authorities.

### [Morocco-Egypt vs South Africa-Nigeria: A race for vaccines on the continent](#)

June 3, 2021, The African Report

While African nations are mobilising to manufacture vaccines locally, industrial capacity is uneven and negotiations with pharmaceutical giants such as Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer-BioNTech remain opaque.

### [Eritrea – Ethiopia: A string of near chances to fully normalise relations](#)

June 3, 2021, The African Report

Ethiopia and Eritrea's tumultuous relationship has a string of missed opportunities to fully normalise relations, since the time of Italy's colonisation. This came about after the stalemate between Ethiopia and Eritrea came to a sudden end, ending a bloody conflict between the two countries and culminating in Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts. Haftay, and thousands of others, finally reunited with their loved ones.



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