



# 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 26

### 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

#### [Chinese S-400 systems across LAC, forces India to rethink air defence](#)

June 23, 2021, Hindustan times

The PLA has upgraded Hotan air base in Xinjiang and Nyingchi air base in Tibet. Both bases are just across the LAC in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh respectively with the PLA deploying S-400 squadrons to protect them from Indian aerial threat.

#### [Arrested intruder says China trying to hack defence ministry websites: STF sources](#)

June 23, 2021, The Economic Times

The Chinese national who was arrested recently in West Bengal's Malda district informed his interrogators that several agencies of his country are trying to hack various websites of the central government including those under the Ministry of Defence, sources in the Special Task Force (STF) probing his case said.

#### [Indian Army plans to buy 1,750 Futuristic Infantry Combat Vehicles, 350 light tanks](#)

June 24, 2021, The Economic Times

Indian Army on Thursday issued the Request for Information (RFI) to finalise the specifications for acquiring 1,750 Futuristic Infantry Combat Vehicles (FICVs) under the Make in India initiative to destroy enemy tanks and carry troops.

#### [India, United States kick off mega wargame in Indian Ocean with eye on China](#)

June 24, 2021, The Economic Times

India and the US on Wednesday kicked off a two-day multi-domain wargame in the Indian Ocean involving an array of air defence platforms to further consolidate their operational synergy in the face of China's increasing military presence in the region.

#### [Indian Army and Navy favour theatre commands, Air Force plays the lone ranger](#)

June 21, 2021, Hindustan Times

Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat has called a meeting on Wednesday of the tri-services and other stake holders to understand their concerns over theatre commands and iron out differences before working towards the raising

of maritime and air defence commands this year. The ministry of defence had accorded acceptance in principle to theatre commands in 2017 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi handing over the mandate of reorganization to Gen Rawat.

#### [Funds no bar, will make Karwar Asia's largest naval base: Rajnath Singh](#)

June 25, 2021, The Times of India

The aim is to make the strategic naval base at Karwar in Karnataka as the largest such base in Asia, said defence minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday, promising that additional funds will be provided for it if required.

#### ["Issue Whether China Lives Up To Commitment...": S Jaishankar Flags Worry](#)

June 23, 2021, NDTV

China's military deployment along its disputed Himalayan border with India and uncertainty over whether Beijing will fulfill its promise on troop reductions remains a challenge for relations between the two neighbors, Foreign minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said.

#### [Understanding Pakistan's Kashmir conundrum](#)

June 22, 2021, The Indian Express

As Delhi initiates political engagement with the leaders of Jammu and Kashmir this week, for the first time since the state was reorganised in August 2019, Pakistan is all ears. In the last couple of weeks, well before Delhi announced its outreach, Islamabad went into a diplomatic overdrive to draw the world's attention to what it claimed as India's "new plans" to further divide Jammu and Kashmir.

## **Pakistan**

#### [At least 3 dead, 21 injured in blast at Lahore's Johar Town](#)

June 23, 2021, Dawn

At least three people were killed and 21 injured after a bomb blast at Lahore's Johar Town, officials said. The explosion took place around 11am in a residential area near the town's Allah Hu boulevard, near the residence of proscribed Jamatud Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed.

#### [Pakistan gets \\$4.5bn facility for oil, LNG imports](#)

June 25, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan has secured a \$4.5 billion worth of three-year trade financing facility from Jeddah-based Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC) to cover import cost of crude, petroleum products and liquefied natural gas (LNG).

### [Bajwa, Azerbaijan president discuss regional security](#)

June 22, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa visited Azerbaijan, where he called on President Ilham Aliyev and Minister for Defence Col Gen Hasanov Zakir Asgar Oglu in Baku. During the meetings, matters of mutual interest, regional security situation, including recent developments in the Afghan peace process, and bilateral defence and security cooperation in various fields were discussed.

### [Imran's remarks on rape draw wide criticism](#)

June 22, 2021, Dawn

Prime Minister Imran Khan faced strong criticism from civil society and political circles over his remarks regarding veil, temptation and rape in an interview with HBO. The civil society and the opposition while lamenting the prime minister's remarks wondered why he had blamed women for being raped due to, what he called, lack of veil and proper dressing.

### [Pakistan spends \\$7.5bn on food imports in July-May](#)

June 20, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan's food import bill grew by 53.98 per cent to \$7.550 billion year-on-year during the 11 months of the current fiscal year (11MFY21) mainly due to sugar, wheat, palm oil and pulses imports to bridge the shortfall in domestic production of agriculture produce. The rising food import bill also triggered trade deficit, which will now cause some uneasiness on the external side for the government in upcoming months.

### [Textile, clothing exports soar to \\$13.7bn](#)

June 20, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan's exports of textile and clothing sectors posted nearly 19 per cent growth in the 11 months of current fiscal year (11MFY21) compared to the same period a year ago. The growth in exports of value-added sectors contributed to an increase in overall exports from the sectors. One of the reasons for growth in these sectors is due to low-base of last year when export-oriented industries remained closed due to the Covid-19 lockdown and cancellation of orders from international buyers.

### [Poverty in Pakistan up from 4.4pc to 5.4pc: WB](#)

June 20, 2021, The News

The World Bank (WB) has estimated that poverty in Pakistan has increased from 4.4 per cent to 5.4 per cent. More than two million people have fallen below the poverty line in Pakistan. The WB used the lower-middle-income poverty rate

(\$3.2 per day) and estimated that the poverty ratio in Pakistan stood at 39.3 per cent in 2020-21 and is projected to remain at 39.2 per cent in 2021-22 and might come down to 37.9 per cent by 2022-23.

#### [Pakistan, IMF differences persist](#)

June 21, 2021, The News

Pakistan and the IMF have so far failed to narrow down their differences, so both sides have decided to put completion of the sixth review under the \$6 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) on hold for the next few months. Pakistan and the IMF authorities could not evolve a consensus on the staff-level agreement, so the completion of the sixth review under the EFF was put on hold till September 2021.

#### [Body set up to steer CPEC projects](#)

June 25, 2021, The Express Tribune

The government has set up Pak-China Relations Steering Committee to remove hurdles in the execution of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, underscoring that Islamabad has finally decided to give a push to the multibillion-dollar strategic initiative.

## **Afghanistan**

#### [Statement by External Affairs Minister at the UNSC Debate on the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan](#)

June 22, 2021, MEA

India has been supportive of all the efforts being made to accelerate the dialogue between the Afghan government and the Taliban, including the intra-Afghan negotiations. If the peace process is to be successful, then it is necessary to ensure that the negotiating parties continue to engage in good faith, eschew the path to find a military solution, and fully commit towards reaching a political solution. A tangible demonstration of this commitment is required.

#### [ANDSF Recaptures Three Districts in North as War Intensifies](#)

June 22, 2021, Tolo News

The Afghan government said that the Afghan National Security and Defense Forces (ANDSF) recaptured three strategic districts from the Taliban: Balkh district in Balkh, Dushi district in Baghlan and Ali Abad district in Kunduz.

### [Travel on Afghan Highways Increasingly Dangerous](#)

June 22, 2021, Tolo News

Amid fighting around the country, passengers in northern and southern provinces are worried about the growing security threats on most of the major highways. A number of travelers in the north of the country said that the Taliban has set up checkpoints in several areas along the Baghlan-Kunduz Highway.

### [Taliban Enter Key Cities in Afghanistan's North After Swift Offensive](#)

June 20, 2021, NYT

The Taliban entered two provincial capitals in northern Afghanistan, local officials said, the culmination of an insurgent offensive that has overrun dozens of rural districts and forced the surrender and capture of hundreds of government forces and their military equipment in recent weeks.

### [Attacked and Vulnerable, Some Afghans Are Forming Their Own Armies](#)

June 22, 2021, NYT

Since the U.S. troop withdrawal was announced in April, regional strongmen have posted videos on social media showing armed men hoisting assault rifles and vowing to fight the Taliban. Some militia leaders fear the flagging peace talks in Doha, Qatar, will collapse after foreign troops depart and the Taliban will intensify an all-out assault to capture provincial capitals and lay siege to Kabul.

### [Departure of U.S. Contractors Poses Myriad Problems for Afghan Military](#)

June 19, 2021, NYT

Even if it could get to the chopper to try to service it, the Afghan military would face another escalating problem: It is heavily reliant on American and other foreign contractors for repairs, maintenance, fueling, training and other jobs necessary to keep their forces operating, and those contractors are now departing along with the American military, leaving a void that leaders on both sides say could be crippling to Afghan forces as they face the Taliban alone.

### [Afghan president replaces security ministers amid Taliban advance](#)

June 19, 2021, Aljazeera

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has replaced two top ministers charged with managing the country's faltering security, as the Taliban presses on with their campaign to capture new territory in fierce battles with government forces. The shake-up of the defence and interior ministry portfolios comes as violence surges and peace talks remain deadlocked, with the Taliban claiming to have seized more than 40 districts in recent weeks across the rugged countryside.



### [Customs Revenue Lost as Taliban-Held Kunduz Dry Port is Closed](#)

June 24, 2021, Tolo News

With the fall of Sher Khan Bandar port in Kunduz province to the Taliban, the government loses an average of more than 2.5 million Afghanis (over \$ 32,000) a day in income from customs offices, according to government information.

### [130 Taliban Members Join Peace Process in Herat: Officials](#)

June 24, 2021, Tolo News

A group of 130 Taliban members laid down their weapons and joined the peace process in the western province of Herat. The group was active in the Zer-e-Koh district of Herat province.

### [US plans to keep about 650 troops in Afghanistan after withdrawal](#)

June 25, 2021, TRT World

Washington will keep around 650 soldiers in Afghanistan to provide security for diplomats after the main American military force completes withdrawal, which is set to be largely done in the next two weeks, according to US officials.

### [White House confirms it plans to evacuate 18,000 Afghans who worked with the U.S. in Afghanistan](#)

June 24, 2021, CBS News

The White House has informed some lawmakers that it plans to evacuate approximately 18,000 Afghans who worked for the U.S. as translators. These Afghans will be able to leave Afghanistan to be temporarily relocated to a yet-to-be-named third country or territory for their own safety, as the Taliban begins to retake more districts during the phased withdrawal of American troops, which President Biden has said will be completed by September 11.

### [Afghanistan running out of oxygen as Covid surge worsens – latest updates](#)

June 20, 2021, TRT World

Afghanistan's is racing to ramp up supplies of oxygen as a deadly third surge of Covid-19 worsens. The government is installing oxygen supply plants in 10 provinces where the increase in Covid cases in some areas is hovering around 65 percent.

### [Biden To Meet Afghan Leaders As Concern Mounts Over Relocation Of Afghans Who Helped U.S.](#)

June 25, 2021, RFERL

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, High Council for National Reconciliation Chairman Abdullah Abdullah , and other delegation members arrive in the

United States on June 25 ahead of talks with President Joe Biden. In their White House meeting with Biden, Ghani and Abdullah will be looking for assurances of U.S. aid for the Afghan government.

## **Bangladesh**

[Vaccine do, Hilsa lo: Is Bangladesh delaying fish export over short supply of Covid jabs from India?](#)

June 23, 2021, India Today

India has a huge fan base for the delectable Hilsa fish, a major import from Bangladesh. However, if sources are to be believed, Bangladesh has decided to take on the short supply of Covid vaccines from India by hitting where it hurts the most for a food-loving country like ours: Bangladesh is restricting the export of Hilsa to India.

[Embezzlement charges: China withdraws from financing three infra projects in Bangladesh](#)

June 24, 2021, The Economic Times

In a major embarrassment China has withdrawn from financing three infrastructure projects in Bangladesh after allegations of embezzlement of funds increasing project costs emerged.

## **Nepal**

[Protests in Nepal's Sindhupalchawk against Chinese road construction firm after landslides](#)

June 22, 2021, Times Now

A Chinese firm -- China Railway Construction Corporation (CRCC), responsible for road construction in Nepal's Sindhupalchawk has been witnessing people's fury over the landslide incidents and damage to houses in the district.

[As Nepal Political Crisis Prolongs, Narrative On India's Influence on Internal Matters Gains Steam](#)

June 23, 2021, The Wire

Earlier this month, in a veiled reference to India, five former prime ministers of Nepal cautioned against alleged external influence in internal matters of Nepal.

## Sri Lanka

### [Sri Lanka Foreign Minister addresses the Asia-Pacific High Level Conference on Belt and Road Cooperation](#)

June 24, 2021, Colombo Page

Addressing the Asia-Pacific High-Level Conference on Belt and Road Cooperation virtually on 23 June, 2021, Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena stressed the importance of enhanced cooperation among states and other partners in addressing the COVID-19 challenges, including by recognizing the vaccines as global public health good.

### [Former Sri Lanka PM Ranil Wickremesinghe returns to Parliament](#)

June 23, 2021, The Hindu

Former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe on Wednesday returned to Parliament, ten months after his United National Party (UNP) suffered its biggest electoral defeat in history.

## East & South East Asia

### China

#### [CPC-led Chinese human rights development 'practicable for most developing countries'](#)

June 24, 2021, Global Times

A Thursday white paper on the practice of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in respecting and protecting human rights highlighted how the Party has always put people first, applying the principle of universality of human rights in the context of the national conditions in its 100 years of leading revolutions and peaceful development.

#### [Pakistan, China stand together in fight against COVID-19](#)

June 25, 2021, Global Times

Chinese and Pakistani officials gathered Thursday in Beijing to witness a donation ceremony organized by the China Centre for Promotion of SME Development, offering to donate oxygen concentrators and face masks to help Pakistan combat the COVID-19 epidemic.

#### [Bosnia and Herzegovina's FM signed Xinjiang-related statement without authorization: Chairman of Presidency](#)

June 24, 2021, Global Times

Without authorization, the foreign ministry of Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the joint statement that smears and attacks China at the 47th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), Milorad Dodik, the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, said in a statement, condemning its foreign ministry for its "illegal" accession of the Western-led joint statement.

#### [Blinken's China containment agenda 'shaky' in Europe trip](#)

June 24, 2021, Global Times

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken kicked off his Europe trip on Tuesday, less than two weeks after President Joe Biden ended his trip to the continent with an agenda concentrated on countering China.

#### [China launches first bullet train in Tibet, close to Indian border](#)

June 25, 2021, The Economic Times

China on Friday operationalised its first fully electrified bullet train in the remote Himalayan region of Tibet, connecting the provincial capital Lhasa and Nyingchi, a strategically located Tibetan border town close to Arunachal Pradesh.

## [China encroachments in Bhutan could emerge as headache for India in chicken's neck](#)

June 24, 2021, The Economic Times

China's increasingly assertive approach to international diplomacy is manifested not just in South China Sea or Taiwan Strait but also in India's neighbourhood through settlements on Bhutanese territory, a report in the Washington Post has said.

## **Japan**

### [Early agreement reached in dispute over Suez Canal ship](#)

June 24, 2021, Japan Today

The owners and insurers of the giant container ship that blocked the Suez Canal for nearly a week earlier this year have reached an agreement in principle over their dispute with canal authorities, representatives from both sides said.

### [Japan, S Korea divided over wartime history, Fukushima water release](#)

June 22, 2021, Japan Today

Senior officials of Japan and South Korea remained divided during their talks Monday over wartime history issues and Tokyo's decision to release treated radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima nuclear power plant into the ocean.

### [Japan sees China-Taiwan friction as threat to its security](#)

June 25, 2021, The Japan Times

Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi said the security of Taiwan was directly linked with that of Japan, as tensions around the island build up and its defenses are increasingly overshadowed by China's military might.

### [Japan seen easing out-of-court debt settlement requirements](#)

June 24, 2021, The Japan Times

The government is considering measures to make it easier for companies and lenders to settle debts out of court, including relaxation of requirements for such settlements.

### [Japan toes India line to seek EU's presence in Indo-Pacific to counter China](#)

June 21, 2021, The Economic Times

Japan, following India's footsteps, has urged Europe to increase its military presence in the Indo-Pacific region to balance China. This comes close on the

heels of the launch of the India-Italy-Japan trilateral last week, which is the first trilateral involving Japan and a European power.

#### [U.S., Japan, S. Korea agree to continue cooperation over N. Korea](#)

June 21, 2021, Kyodo News

U. S., Japanese and South Korean envoys agreed Monday to continue cooperating toward complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through early resumption of dialogue with North Korea, the South's Foreign Ministry said.

#### [Japan to work with U.S., others to improve process for AI patents](#)

June 24, 2021, Japan Today

Japan will cooperate with the United States, most European nations, China and South Korea to improve application and examination procedures for patents related to artificial intelligence and new technologies, sources close to the matter said.

### **Korea**

#### [Korea-U.S. alliance remains linchpin of peace 71 years after start of Korean War: Pentagon](#)

June 25, 2021, The Korea Times

The United States remains committed to the South Korea-U.S. alliance, 71 years after the start of the Korean War, a Pentagon spokesman said, calling the alliance the "linchpin of peace" for the region and the world.

#### [India-Korea signed an MOU with Jeonbuk Business Centre's Help to further Trade Relations](#)

June 21, 2021, The Print

Jeonbuk Business Centre (JBC), a business-to-business platform, known for being a one-stop destination for facilitating trade helped Korean trader, Navis Aroma, sign an MOU of \$600,000 with an Indian trader earlier this month.

#### [US, South Korea To Consider Ending North Korea Coordination Group](#)

June 22, 2021, NDTV

The United States and South Korea have agreed to consider scrapping a working group established to coordinate North Korea policy, Seoul's foreign ministry said on Tuesday, after it became seen as a way for Washington to block inter-Korean projects.

### [North Korea rejects talks with US, says dialogue will lead nowhere](#)

June 23, 2021, Hindustan Times

North Korea's foreign minister on Wednesday ruled out any talks with the United States, saying dialogue with Washington would "get us nowhere".

### **Southeast Asia**

#### [Raab's Asean trip highlights UK's plan to reinvent itself by shifting trade and foreign policy focus, analysts say](#)

June 24, 2021, SCMP

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab's three-nation tour of Southeast Asia that ended in Singapore on Thursday goes some way in putting meat on the bones to the European power's plan to reinvent itself in the region in the post-Brexit era, analysts say.

#### [UN says 230,000 displaced by Myanmar fighting](#)

June 24, 2021, The Times of India

An estimated 230,000 people have been displaced by fighting and violence in Myanmar this year and are in need of assistance, the United Nations humanitarian agency said.

#### [India's Abstention At The UN On Myanmar Vote](#)

June 23, 2021, Outlook India

It does not meet the objective of keeping China under check for which the next "Quad" Summit is meeting later this year.

#### [South China Sea Code Of Conduct Shouldn't Prejudice 3rd Party Interests: India](#)

June 25, 2021, NDTV

Underlining its interest in maintaining peace and stability, freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea, India on Thursday asserted at an East Asia Summit meeting that the code of conduct being negotiated for the region should not prejudice the legitimate interests of third parties and be fully consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

#### [Code of conduct for South China Sea shouldn't prejudice legitimate interests of 3rd parties: India](#)

June 24, 2021, The Times of India

Underlining its interest in maintaining peace and stability, freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea India on Thursday asserted at

an East Asia Summit meeting that the code of conduct being negotiated for the region should not prejudice the legitimate interests of third parties and be fully consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

[Have a stronger military presence in Asia to tackle China: Japan urges European nations](#)

June 21, 2021, WION

As Tokyo strives to put "tremendous pressure" on Beijing to counter China's dominance in the area, Japan's defence minister has asked European nations to have a stronger military presence in the Asia-Pacific.



## Central & West Asia

### Central Asia

#### [NSA Ajit Doval attends SCO meeting in Dushanbe](#)

June 24, 2021, India Today

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on June 24 attended a meeting of the top security officials from the member nations of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Tajikistan capital Dushanbe.

#### [Kazakh Activists Start Hunger Strike To Protest Opposition Party Ban](#)

June 21, 2021, RFE/RL

Several Kazakh activists have launched a hunger strike, demanding the cancellation of a court decision to ban the opposition Koshe (Street) party. Several residents of the Central Asian nation's largest city, Almaty, started the hunger strike on June 20 in front of the Esil district court, which banned the party a year ago.

#### [Turkmen Students Ambushed After Exams To Fill Ranks Of Army Conscripts](#)

June 21, 2021, RFE/RL

Dozens of graduating students who came to school for their final exams this week in Turkmenistan have been hauled off by military recruiters hunting for mandatory conscripts, according to parents and eyewitnesses. With few exceptions, up to two years of military service is mandatory in Turkmenistan for men between 18 and 27 years old. But many of them try to avoid the army, which is notorious for bullying and miserable conditions.

#### [New Opposition Party in Uzbekistan Denied Registration, Again](#)

June 22, 2021, The Diplomat

In four months, Uzbekistan will hold a presidential election. But the already minute possibility of new parties fronting fresh candidates has been further diminished by a Ministry of Justice decision to refuse registration to the Haqiqat va Taraqqiyot (Truth and Progress) Social Democratic Party. The party, after being rejected in April, re-applied but was again rejected by the Ministry of Justice.

#### [Kazakhstan draws on current crises in designing national security strategy](#)

June 23, 2021, Eurasianet

As of this week, Kazakhstan has a new national security strategy, the first adopted under President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, albeit only after approval from his predecessor. The document signed on June 21 focuses on highly

topical issues, like the threats posed to security by viral pandemics, environmental threats, food shortages and the management of water resources.

#### [Tajikistan braces for spillover from Afghanistan unrest](#)

June 23, 2021, Eurasianet

Tajikistan's security services have confirmed that more than 130 Afghan troops were forced to flee across the border in the face of an overwhelming Taliban onslaught, sparking fears that spiraling instability in Afghanistan is already putting pressure on neighboring nations. A statement released late June 22 said that the Taliban assault focused on the Shir Khan Bandar border crossing, which is linked to Tajikistan by a U.S.-funded bridge.

#### [US, Kazakhstan to cooperate on development assistance to Central Asia, Afghanistan](#)

June 25, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

The U.S. Agency for International Development and the Kazakhstan Agency for International Development on June 24 signed a memorandum of understanding to increase cooperation on development assistance that fosters social, political, and economic stability and security in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

### **West Asia**

#### [RIL-Saudi Aramco Deal to Close this Year: Mukesh Ambani](#)

June 24, 2021, Mint

Mukesh Ambani, chairman and managing director of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) said he expects the company's deal with Saudi Aramco to materialise this year. Meanwhile, Yasir Al-Rumayyan, chairman of Saudi Aramco and the Governor of the Public Investment Fund, joined the board of Reliance as an independent director.

#### [PM Modi Congratulates Iran's New President Ebrahim Raisi](#)

June 20, 2021, Mint

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Iran's new president Ebrahim Raisi and said that he looked forward to working with him to strengthen diplomatic ties between the two countries.

### [India Starts Exporting GI-certified Jalgaon Banana to Dubai](#)

June 16, 2021, Mint

In a major boost to India's exports of Geographical Indications (GI) certified agricultural produce, a consignment of fibre and mineral rich 'Jalgaon Banana' has been shipped to Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

### [India's Agriculture Exports Jump 17.34 Percent to \\$41.25 Billion in FY21](#)

June 10, 2021, Business Standard

India is seeing growth in the export of cereals, non-basmati rice, wheat, millets, maize, and other coarse grains. The largest markets for India's agricultural products are the US, China, Bangladesh, the UAE, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Nepal, Iran, and Malaysia.

### [Close Ties Expected to Continue between Israel & India Under New Israeli PM Naftali Bennett, officials say](#)

June 14, 2021, Moneycontrol

India and Israel had come increasingly closer both geo politically and economically under the outgoing Premier Benjamin Netanyahu, with an unprecedented convergence in foreign policy that is not expected to be weakened anytime soon, senior officials from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

### [India Welcomes Saudi Arabia's Decision to Cancel Hajj 2021 due to Covid: Union Minister](#)

June 15, 2021, Mint

Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi has welcomed Saudi Arabia's decision to cancel Haj this year amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and said the Indian government supports the move.

### [Search on for Remaining Malayali IS Cadre in Syria, Afghanistan](#)

June 13, 2021, The New Indian Express

Though the exact number of Malayalis who joined IS and did hijra (migration) to other countries is not known, it is estimated there could be 60 such people, including women and children.

### [Bahrain Suspends New Work Permits for Citizens of India, Other 'red List' Nations](#)

June 14, 2021, The Week

Weeks after suspending the entry of passengers from India and other nations on account of the COVID-19 situation, the Bahrain government has

announced a temporary suspension of issuance of new work permits to citizens from countries on its 'red list' including India.

[Iraq Expects Oil Prices to Reach \\$80/barrel - State News Agency](#)

June 20, 2021, Reuters

Iraq expects oil prices to reach \$80 per barrel, the country's state news agency reported on Sunday (June 20), citing an oil ministry spokesman.

[Pentagon Pulls Missile Defense, other Systems from Saudi Arabia and other Middle East countries](#)

June 19, 2021, CNN

The Pentagon is pulling missile defense systems and other military hardware and personnel from Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Middle East, according to a defense official, as it realigns its mission and forces to confront China and Russia.

[Erdogan Says he told President Biden Turkey to Keep Stance on S-400s](#)

June 17, 2021, AL Jazeera

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said he told his United States counterpart, Joe Biden, that Ankara will not change its stance on its Russian S-400 missile defences over which it has been sanctioned by Washington.

## United States

### [Biden to meet with Afghanistan leaders amid Taliban resurgence, US troop withdrawal](#)

June 25, 2021, USA Today

President Joe Biden will meet with Afghan leaders at the White House on Friday amid an ongoing U.S. military withdrawal as Afghanistan's future remains in limbo.

### [US has 'no better friend' than Germany, says US top diplomat Antony Blinken](#)

June 23, 2021, Deutsche Welle

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Berlin for talks with German Chancellor Merkel and Foreign Minister Maas. He was eager to impress the importance of good US-German relations.

### [Russian gas pipeline vexes U.S. charm offensive in Germany](#)

June 23, 2021, Associated Press

The United States and Germany struggled Wednesday to resolve a major dispute over a Russian gas pipeline, even as the Biden administration seeks to improve relations with Western Europe that had been strained during Donald Trump's presidency.

### [No meeting planned between Blinken and China's Wang at G20 -U.S. official](#)

June 23, 2021, Reuters

There is no meeting planned between U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at a G20 gathering in Italy next week, a State Department official said on Wednesday, after the Financial Times reported that Beijing and Washington were discussing such a meeting.

### [India's US envoy discusses partnership possibilities with Wyoming Governor](#)

June 23, 2021, The Times of India

India's ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu has discussed the possibilities of partnerships in various sectors including energy, agriculture and education with Governor of the US State of Wyoming Mark Gordon.

### [U.S. lobby group views India's e-commerce plan as worrying, email shows](#)

June 24, 2021, Reuters

A top lobby group that is part of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce believes India's proposed new e-commerce rules are a cause for concern and will lead to a stringent operating environment for companies, according to an email reviewed by Reuters.

## Europe & Russia

### Europe

#### [EU to form united front to battle Chinese and Russian cyberthreats](#)

June 24, 2021, Nikkei Asia

Mounting digital security threats from China, Russia and elsewhere have driven the European Union to devise a Joint Cyber Unit, intended for launch by 2022, to coordinate a response to attacks anywhere in the bloc.

#### [MEPs push Brussels to follow Biden on Taiwan trade](#)

June 18, 2021, Politico

EU lawmakers are fed up with the European Commission's reluctance to start an investment deal with Taiwan, while U.S. President Joe Biden has his sights set on trade talks with Taipei. The indecision on the part of EU policymakers — out of fear of provoking Beijing, which could tear up the hard-earned but unratified EU-China pact — runs in stark contrast to Biden's announcement to launch trade talks with the island "in coming weeks."

#### [Russia warns Britain it will bomb ships next time](#)

June 25, 2021, Reuters

Russia warned Britain on Thursday that it would bomb British naval vessels in the Black Sea if there were any further provocative actions by the British navy off the coast of Russia-annexed Crimea.

#### [EU leaders reject France, Germany's proposal for Putin summit](#)

June 25, 2021, France24

European Union leaders failed to agree on a proposal by France and Germany to hold a summit soon with Russian President Vladimir Putin after Poland and Baltic countries said it would send the wrong message as East-West ties deteriorate.

#### [EU should be in cooperation with Turkey: Germany's Merkel](#)

June 24, 2021, Daily Sabah

Despite existing disagreements, the European Union and Germany should be in cooperation with Turkey, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Thursday ahead of an EU summit.

### [After 16 years of Merkel, EU summit could mark end of an era](#)

June 24, 2021, The Guardian

When Angela Merkel attended her first EU summit in December 2005, her fellow leaders included Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac. It was a different world from the one that exists now as she attends what could be her last.

### [EU sanctions Belarus over flight incident, alleged rights abuses](#)

June 24, 2021, Al Jazeera

The European Union has imposed wide-ranging economic sanctions on Belarus in response to what the bloc called the "escalation of serious human rights violations", including the detention of Roman Protasevich.

### [Hungary 'has no place in the EU anymore,' Dutch leader says](#)

June 25, 2021, CNN

Hungary "has no place" in the European Union after passing a controversial new bill banning LGBTQ content in schools, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said on Thursday.

### [Senior officials of India, France and Australia hold talks on G20 meet](#)

June 23, 2021, Deccan Herald

Senior officials of India, France and Australia on Wednesday held talks as part of the preparation for a crucial meeting of the G20 in Italy next week.

## **Russia**

### [Putin Promises Billions In New Spending Ahead Of Russian Elections](#)

June 19, 2021, RFE/RL

Russian President Vladimir Putin has promised billions of rubles in additional spending in the months remaining before legislative elections in September. Putin was addressing a congress of the ruling United Russia party in Moscow on June 19. Putin praised United Russia for its "ability to renew and constantly develop" in a speech in which he promised to boost spending on infrastructure, education, and health care.

### [Election to Duma should be held honestly and openly, Putin says](#)

June 19, 2021, TASS News Agency

The election to the State Duma (the lower house of Russia's parliament) should be held fairly and openly to enjoy the trust of the people, Russian President Vladimir Putin said at the congress of the United Russia ruling party. Putin

emphasized that the election campaign is always a challenge for the political system, which is tested for resilience and efficiency.

### [Russia Sends Series of Proposals to US on How to Stabilise Relations, Ambassador Says](#)

June 22, 2021, Sputnik News

Russia has sent a series of proposals to the US on how both countries can stabilise bilateral relations, Russian Ambassador Antonov said on June 21. He also added that the overall improvement of bilateral relations with the US depends on the political will in Washington. Moreover, Antonov emphasised that Russia is set to constructively build towards equal, pragmatic relations with America.

### [European Court Orders Russia To Pay Almost \\$2.4 Million To Relatives Of People Missing In Chechnya](#)

June 22, 2021, RFE/RL

The European Court of Human Rights has ordered Russia to pay almost two million euros (\$2.4 million) to the relatives of 11 people who went missing in Chechnya in 2005 during a special operation by the Vostok (East) military unit. The ECHR ruled on June 22 that Russia violated several articles of the European Convention on Human Rights, including the right to life.

### [Moscow Warns of Dire Consequences in Event of Provocations Similar to HMS Defender Incident](#)

June 24, 2021, Sputnik News

Russia's Foreign Ministry has warned that anyone who carries out provocations similar to the UK HMS Defender incident, that occurred on 23 June, would face dire consequences, according to the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov. On 23 June, Russia's Black Sea Fleet together with border forces of the Federal Security Service expelled the UK destroyer Defender which had entered into Russian territorial waters.

### [British PM Defends Freedom Of Navigation After Black Sea Incident With Russia](#)

June 24, 2021, RFE/RL

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has insisted the U.K. Navy was "entirely right" to defend freedom of navigation following an incident with Russia in the Black Sea, while Moscow warned it was prepared to fire on warships entering territorial waters it claims around Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.



## [Merkel says no consensus in EU over summit with Russia](#)

June 25, 2021, TASS News Agency

The European Union leaders failed to reach an agreement about holding a joint summit with Russia, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Friday following the first day of the EU summit. The EU diplomatic service said that the summit would consider initiatives by EU members about future relations with Russia.

## Africa & Latin America

### Africa

#### [AU observers detail challenges as Ethiopia awaits election results](#)

24 June 2021, Africa Times

As Ethiopians continued to wait for official results in this week's elections, the African Union election observer mission issued a preliminary report concluding that despite some flaws, the voting process was orderly and peaceful.

#### [Zimbabwe's command economics rattles the markets again](#)

21 June 2021, The African Report

A new decree from President Mnangagwa's government to abolish the parallel market and shore up the ailing local dollar could prove counter-productive and drive up inflation again, according to traders in the capital.

#### [Senegal's president joins the chorus against Twitter and Facebook](#)

21 June 2021, The African Report

Now that President Macky Sall has called for new legislation to give the Senegalese government greater control of social media, internet users are suffering the consequences – namely censorship – of the online excesses of a minority.

#### [Somalia: How GERD is steering Mogadishu into the crossfires of Egypt & Ethiopia](#)

22 June 2021, The African Report

After meeting in the Qatari capital with foreign ministers from the 22 Arab League member states, a statement was issued on Tuesday 15 July in support of Egypt and Sudan regarding the controversial Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). This puts Somalia in a difficult position: it is a member of the League, but it has also created a new military alliance with Ethiopia.

#### [DRC: Tshisekedi to review 'Chinese' mining contracts, will allies agree?](#)

24 June 2021, The African Report

DRC's President Félix Tshisekedi hopes to persuade foreign mining companies to review contracts that they finalised under Joseph Kabila. To win the upcoming battle, he will also have to convince his own political friends, most of whom are involved in joint ventures, that his approach is a valid one.

## Latin America

### [Argentine freezes meat prices, exports to resume next week but not of all cuts](#)

21 June 2021, MercoPress

Argentine Minister of Productive Development Matías Kulfas admitted the administration of President Alberto Fernández plans to both ban exports of the beef cuts most coveted by local consumers and freeze domestic prices until late this year.

### [Argentina and Mexico recall ambassadors to Nicaragua out of concern for human rights violations](#)

22 June 2021, MercoPress

The Governments of Mexico and Argentina recalled their respective ambassadors in Managua, where Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega is undertaking a dubious campaign towards his reelection by having his political challengers arrested.

### [Argentina to take additional measures against Delta coronavirus variant spreading into the country](#)

22 June 2021, MercoPress

Argentine health and migration authorities are analysing additional measures to curb the arrival into the country of the coronavirus Delta variant, which has already been detected in three cases of passengers flying in from abroad.

### [Anti covid-19 vaccination of teenagers starts in Chile with Pfizer](#)

23 June 2021, MercoPress

Chile will begin vaccinating people under 18 years of age against the coronavirus, according to an announcement by President Sebastián Piñera Tuesday. The Pfizer drug is the only one to be used in this age group.

### [Argentine President ironically describes vaccines against coronavirus as "poison"](#)

23 June 2021, MercoPress

Argentine President Alberto Fernández criticized opposition parties: "Now they demand the second dose of poison from us," he said. With people who have already received the first part of the immunizing treatment anxious to know when or if the full procedure will become available, opposition politicians took advantage of that situation to berate the Government's efforts in that regard.

[Game over: C14 resolution ignores Falklands' pleas and again calls for a bilateral dialogue Argentina/UK](#)

25 June 2021, MercoPress

The United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization, C24, addressed the annual Falklands/Malvinas sovereignty question, which once again concluded with an appeal to the governments of Argentina and Britain to resume dialogue with the purpose of finding, in the shortest time possible, a peaceful solution to the controversy.



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