



# 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 29

### 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 .....	9
Central & West Asia .....	15
United States.....	19
Europe & Russia .....	22
Africa & Latin America .....	26

## South Asia

### India

#### [Rajnath Singh Briefs Sharad Pawar, AK Antony On China Border Row](#)

July 16, 2021, NDTV

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met with Congress leader AK Antony and Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar and briefed them about the situation along the border with China. Both Mr Antony and Mr Pawar are former Defence Ministers.

#### [LAC situation impacting bilateral ties in a negative manner: Jaishankar to Wang](#)

July 15, 2021, The Indian Express

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar firmly conveyed to his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi that the prolongation of the existing situation in eastern Ladakh was visibly impacting the bilateral ties in a "negative manner" and said that there was no forward movement from the Chinese side since the disengagement in Pangong lake areas in February that had created conditions for resolving the remaining issues.

#### [UK's largest warship enters Indian Ocean, to conduct exercises with Indian Navy](#)

July 16, 2021, Hindustan Times

The UK's largest warship, the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, and its strike task group has sailed into the Indian Ocean region, where it will conduct joint exercises with the Indian Navy as part of Britain's efforts to enhance its profile in the Indo-Pacific.

#### [Centre set to appoint National Maritime Security Coordinator](#)

July 14, 2021, Hindustan Times

Two decades after the recommendation by the Kargil Group of Ministers (GoM), the Union government is set to appoint a National Maritime Security Coordinator (NMSC) to interface between the civilian and military maritime domains with the objective of enhancing India's security architecture and energy security. The maritime security coordinator will work under the National Security Adviser (NSA), and be the principal advisor to the government on maritime security domain, people familiar with the matter said.

[India, Sri Lanka and Maldives hold virtual trilateral exercise on maritime security](#)

July 15, 2021, The Print

Top defence officials from India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives participated in a virtual trilateral table top exercise where they discussed best practices and procedures for countering common trans-national maritime crime like curbing narcotics and assistance in maritime search and rescue.

[Indian Navy receives tenth P-8I maritime patrol aircraft from Boeing](#)

July 13, 2021, Mint

Indian Navy has received its 10th anti-submarine warfare and maritime patrol aircraft P-8I Poseidon from the US-based aerospace company Boeing. The aircraft is used for maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare.

[S Jaishankar calls on Afghanistan president, vows support amid Taliban violence](#)

July 16, 2021, The Times of India

India redoubled its energies on Afghanistan, as foreign minister S Jaishankar met Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in Tashkent on Thursday, indicating continued support in the face of a Taliban onslaught.

[Condemn killing of Indian journalist in Kandahar: Harsh Shringla at UNSC](#)

July 16, 2021, Hindustan Times

India's foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla condemned at UN Security Council (UNSC) meeting the killing of Indian photojournalist Danish Siddiqui at Kandahar province in Afghanistan.

**Pakistan**

[Blinken, Qureshi discuss Afghan situation](#)

July 10, 2021, Dawn

US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi spoke to underscore their desire for a stable and sustainable relationship between the two countries. Mr Blinken announced the conversation in a tweet he posted on his official site, saying: "Pakistani Foreign Minister S.M. Qureshi and I had a call to underscore our desire for a stable and sustainable bilateral relationship".

### [15pc salary increase for military personnel approved](#)

July 14, 2021, Dawn

The cabinet approved 15 per cent increase in the salary of military personnel, which is in addition to 10pc raise announced in the federal budget. In another significant development, the cabinet endorsed the ban on Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP).

### [9 Chinese, 4 Pakistanis killed in Dasu bus tragedy](#)

July 15, 2021, Dawn

Thirteen people, including nine Chinese nationals, two personnel of the Frontier Constabulary (FC) and two locals, were killed and 28 others sustained injuries when a coach carrying them to an under-construction tunnel site of the 4,300-megawatt Dasu hydropower project fell into a ravine in the Upper Kohistan area after an explosion.

### [New roadmap for ties with US being finalised, Senate body told](#)

July 15, 2021, Dawn

The Senate Committee on Defence and National Security was informed that a new roadmap for broad-based ties with the United States was being finalised. National Security Adviser Dr Moeed Yusuf, while briefing the committee, said an effort was being made to expand the ties from just being Afghanistan specific.

### [Pakistan, Uzbekistan agree to finalise Preferential Trade Agreement](#)

July 15, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan and Uzbekistan agreed to finalise bilateral Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) within three months to further boost bilateral trade volume. At the 6th meeting of the Uzbek-Pakistani Intergovernmental Commission on Trade-Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation (IGC) held in Tashkent, both sides agreed to form joint working groups on agriculture, information technology, education and mineral sectors to boost cooperation, said a news release issued here.

### [Govt won't let Afghan refugees reach cities this time](#)

July 13, 2021, Dawn

Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry said Pakistan was keenly monitoring the fast changing situation in Afghanistan and making all out efforts for an all-encompassing government in Kabul. Speaking at a joint press conference with Adviser to the Prime Minister on Accountability Mirza Shahzad Akbar and Minister for Energy Hammad Azhar, he said that in case the Afghans sought refuge in Pakistan, the government would not allow them to sneak into cities

and would confine them to refugee camps to be established in the Pak-Afghan border areas.

#### [Traces of explosives found on Dasu bus, blast site: govt](#)

July 16, 2021, Dawn

Stepping back from its earlier position that the blast on Chinese workers' bus was caused by accidental leakage of gas, the government said it could potentially be a terrorism incident as traces of explosives had been detected on the wreckage of the bus and at the blast site.

#### [Terms of accord for gas pipeline signed with Russia](#)

July 16, 2021, Dawn

After four days of negotiations, Pakistan and Russia signed Heads of Terms (HoTs) of shareholders' agreement for construction of about 1,100km gas pipeline from Port Qasim in Karachi to Lahore at an estimated cost of \$2.5-3 billion by the end of 2023.

#### [CPEC Authority includes six key projects of KP](#)

July 14, 2021, The News

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority has included 6 key projects of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the upcoming meeting of Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) of CPEC. However, the KP government has sent a request to the chairman of CPEC Authority to include nine additional projects in the CPEC portfolio.

#### [China postpones JCC meeting](#)

July 15, 2021, The Express Tribune

The meeting of Joint Cooperation Committee – the strategic brain of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor – was abruptly postponed, underscoring the challenges that both the nations have to face due to changing regional security situation. The decision to postpone the meeting was taken a day after nine Chinese and five Pakistani nationals were killed in an accident, which Chinese authorities have described as a bomb attack but Pakistan initially termed it a vehicle failure.

#### [PM Imran assures Chinese counterpart of thorough investigation in Dasu incident](#)

July 15, 2021, The Express Tribune

Prime Minister Imran Khan assured his Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang that 'no effort' will be spared to 'fully investigate' the Kohistan bus incident that claimed the lives of nine Chinese nationals. "He [prime minister] assured that no effort

would be spared to fully investigate the incident," said a statement from the Prime Minister's Office detailing the telephone call between the two premiers.

#### [US never asked for military bases in Pakistan: Western diplomats](#)

July 13, 2021, The News

The United States has "at no stage or at any level even asked" Pakistan for military bases in the wake of withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan, a senior Western diplomat has said. "Nobody in the entire US administration asked for bases, and yet there is so much focus on the issue in Pakistan," said the official, who was speaking on condition of anonymity because he is not authorised to speak publicly on the subject.

#### [Pakistan deputed envoys in China to lure investors](#)

July 11, 2021, The News

Pakistan has deputed new counselors in China to promote foreign investment in industrialisation under the second phase of the latter-financed economic projects in the south Asian economy.

### **Afghanistan**

#### [UK could work with Taliban in Afghan govt: defence secretary](#)

July 15, 2021, The News

UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said Britain will work with the Taliban if they entered into a power-sharing government in Afghanistan and respected human rights. "Whatever the government of the day is, provided it adheres to certain international norms, the UK government will engage with it," he told the Daily Telegraph.

#### [Gen Miller hands over command to Afghan govt](#)

July 13, 2021, The News

General Austin Scott Miller – the top US general in Afghanistan – relinquished command and handed it over to the Afghan government at an official ceremony in the capital. In a simple ceremony, General Miller handed over his duties to two US generals – one who will oversee US military action from Central Command headquarters in Florida, and one who will command the roughly 650 troops to remain after the official US withdrawal, reports the international media.



### [Taliban ask Turkey to leave Afghanistan](#)

July 13, 2021, The News

The Taliban called on Turkey to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan like the other NATO countries. Suhail Shaheen, the Taliban's spokesman, said as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Nato), Turkey must withdraw its forces from Afghanistan in accordance with the agreement signed with the United States on February 29, 2020.

### [Ismail Khan mobilises hundreds in Herat to fight Taliban](#)

July 10, 2021, The News

Mohammad Ismail Khan, a former mujahideen leader and a senior member of Jamiat-e-Islami party, has mobilized hundreds of his loyalists in Herat province in the west of Afghanistan to fight the Taliban as the group continues to capture large swaths of territories across the country.

### [Afghan govt claims recapture of border crossing opposite Chaman](#)

July 15, 2021, The Express Tribune

Afghan security forces have retaken control of a major southern border crossing with Pakistan that the Taliban briefly captured, a senior Afghan government official said, but the Taliban dismissed that saying they still held the town.

### [Kandahar Airstrike 'Aborted' Over Pakistan's Warning: Sources](#)

July 16, 2021, Tolo News

Operation by three A29 aircraft of the Afghan Air Force on Taliban targets in Spin Boldak, Kandahar, on July 15, was aborted after "receiving warning" from Pakistan's forces. A copy of the conversation which was sent to TOLO news by government sources shows that Afghan Air Force was warned that they are getting "closer to the border," but an Afghan military official claims that they were warned not to get closer as much as 18 kilometers to the international border point in Chaman and Spin Boldak.

### [Indian Journalist Killed in Clashes in Afghanistan](#)

July 16, 2021, Tolo News

Danish Siddiqui, a Reuters photojournalist, was killed during clashes in Spin Boldak district in Kandahar. The Indian journalist was covering the situation in Kandahar over the last few days.

## [Russia Opposes Possible US Military Deployment in Central Asia](#)

July 13, 2021, Tolo News

Russia stated its opposition to a possible plan by the United States to deploy its troops in Central Asia countries once it pulls out its troops from Afghanistan on August 31, which will also mark the end of two decades of military engagement in Afghanistan. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that the presence of over 100,000 US and NATO forces in Afghanistan in the past decades did not result in a victory for the US in Afghanistan, and questioned what the US wants to achieve by deploying fewer numbers of troops outside.

## [Indian Govt: Consulate in Kandahar Not Closed](#)

July 11, 2021, Tolo News

The spokesperson for India's foreign ministry, Shri Arindam Bagchi, said that the consulate in southern Kandahar province is not closed, contrary to some Indian media reports. However, Indian personnel have been evacuated, the spokesperson said.

## **Bangladesh**

### [India, Bangladesh discuss expanding multifaceted cooperation, connectivity, Rohingya issues](#)

July 16, 2021, India Blooms

Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Bangladesh counterpart AK Abdul Momen discussed bilateral and regional connectivity, the vaccine situation, and expanding multifaceted cooperation, while emphasizing on resuming the activities of various joint mechanisms after the Covid scenario improves in both countries, during a meeting on the sidelines of a conference in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

### [Bangladesh resists 'debt-trap' of China, avoids Belt and Road Initiative heavy-handedness](#)

July 11, 2021, Mint

Unlike Pakistan and Sri Lanka, Bangladesh has conducted prudent macro-economic management in order to not fall into any 'debt trap' of China and has avoided the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) heavy-handedness!

[India, U.S. congratulate Sher Bahadur Deuba on being appointed Nepal prime minister](#)

July 14, 2021, The Hindu

India and US have congratulated Sher Bahadur Deuba on being appointed the PM of Nepal.

## **Nepal**

[Nepal's transit deal with China remains stalled even after five years](#)

July 12, 2021, ANI

Even after the passage of five years since the signing of the Nepal- China Transit and Transportation Agreement, Nepal and China have been unable to make headways in a much touted bilateral deal.

## **Sri Lanka**

[India, Sri Lanka and Maldives Hold Joint Exercise On Maritime Security](#)

July 15, 2021, NDTV

Top defence officials from India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives participated in a virtual trilateral table top exercise where they discussed best practices and procedures for countering common transnational maritime crime like curbing narcotics and assistance in maritime search and rescue.

[China building another enclave in Sri Lanka: CPC](#)

July 15, 2021, Big News Network

China is building yet another enclave in Sri Lanka, Colombo Port City (CPC), raising concerns not only about its impact on local livelihood and traditional ways of being but even on the environment and the sovereign status of the land that would constitute the city.

## East & South East Asia

### China

#### [Chinese ports play key role in global recovery](#)

July 16, 2021, China Daily

Brisk activity at ports across China is set to be one of the most visible effects of the ongoing global recovery, a think tank said.

#### [FM calls on India to focus on mutual respect, development](#)

July 16, 2021, China Daily

China-India ties are still at a low point, "which is not in the interests of either side", State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi told Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar .

#### [Non-CPC figures pool wisdom for new development paradigm](#)

July 14, 2021, Xinhuanet

Senior members of non-communist parties and prominent individuals without party affiliation put forward proposals on fostering a new development paradigm in China at a meeting attended by top political advisor Wang Yang.

#### [Full text of statement of APEC Informal Economic Leaders' Retreat](#)

July 17, 2021, Xinhua

The [full text of the statement](#) following the Informal Economic Leaders' Retreat of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) was issued on Friday.

#### [US, DPP warned as military aircraft lands in Taipei](#)

July 15, 2021, Global Times

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) can expel, fire warning shots or even shoot down foreign military aircraft that trespass upon China's airspace, Chinese military observers warned Thursday, after a second US air force plane landed on the island of Taiwan in less than two months, which also triggered stern responses from the Chinese Defense Ministry and the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council.

#### [China urges Taliban to denounce terrorism](#)

July 15, 2021, Global Times

The situation in Afghanistan is getting more and more complicated as both the Afghan government and the Taliban, which are fighting each other, are making diplomatic efforts to win support or understanding overseas as the US and its allies leave a huge mess in the country and in the region, and China is paying

efforts to stabilize the situation and prevent any potential crisis that could impact regional security.

[US, Taiwan could face sudden blow at any time in Taiwan Straits: Global Times editorial](#)

July 17, 2021, Global Times

A US C-146A Wolfhound landed at Taipei Songshan Airport on Thursday morning and made a brief stop to deliver a package to the new American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) director, Sandra Oudkirk. The Chinese Ministry of National Defense responded by warning the US to stop playing with fire.

[China-proposed regional connectivity a 'specific and concrete step' to work on Afghan peace: analysts](#)

July 17, 2021, Global Times

China urges Central and South Asian countries to forge a closer regional connectivity partnership through high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi proposed on Friday. Analysts say the move is a concrete plan to glue regional countries together on working on a solution for Afghan peace.

[WSJ China Buys Friends With Ports and Roads. Now the U.S. Is Trying to Compete](#)

July 15, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

To counter China's rising global economic influence, Washington has taken a new direction with foreign assistance. Rather than just lend money or promote trade, as in recent decades, the U.S. is now investing dollars overseas to advance American national-security interests. It wants ports, cellular networks and other strategic assets to stay in friendly hands. At the forefront of this effort is an agency Congress overhauled in 2019, the International Development Finance Corp., or DFC.

[China Imprisons Uyghur Businessmen Once Seen as Bridges to Community](#)

July 13, 2021The Wall Street Journal

In recent years, the Xinjiang regional government has enacted a slew of draconian policies aimed at subduing the region's minorities, including extrajudicial detention of as many as one million people. Lawmakers in the U.S., the U.K. and other countries have described China's policies as genocide—a charge that Beijing vehemently denies.

### [China is stifling needed innovation](#)

July 12, 2021, Taipei Times

While the CCP has encouraged innovation in China's private sector, sometimes even encouraging companies to develop and experiment without restriction, the party has retaken control and withdrawn the freedom to innovate in markets where companies have grown to a size that could threaten its authority. This has happened in the financial technology and e-commerce sectors – to Ant Group last year, and Alibaba Group Holding and Didi Global this year.

### **Japan**

#### [In A Warning To China, Japan's New Strategy Paper Mentions Taiwan For The First Time](#)

July 15, 2021, Forbes

Japan's annual defense white paper for the first time stresses the importance of Taiwan to the peace and security of the Asia-Pacific region.

#### [Japan asks airlines to halt new bookings as Olympic traffic rises](#)

July 16, 2021, Kyodo News

The Japanese government has asked airlines to halt new bookings by the general public for flights arriving in Japan during the period when arrivals of athletes and delegation officials for the Tokyo Olympics increase, according to sources close to the matter.

#### [Japan and Australia agree to promote regional trade deals](#)

July 15, 2021, The Japan Times

Japan and Australia agreed Thursday to promote the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership regional trade deals as a way of revitalizing pandemic-hit economies.

#### [How Japan can help tackle East Asia's coronavirus surge](#)

July 16, 2021, The Japan Times

East Asian countries have largely managed to keep their numbers of COVID-19 fatalities remarkably low compared with Europe and the United States through strict border and movement control measures. Today, these countries are seeing a surge in infections due to highly contagious variants transcending borders – challenges Japan has been struggling with.

[Japan one of India's most trusted friends in strategic, economic spheres: Modi](#)

July 16, 2021, The Indian Express

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday called Japan a trustworthy friend as he inaugurated the International Cooperation and Convention Centre, Rudraksh, in Varanasi, constructed with Japanese assistance.

**Korea**

[U.S. will need to work with China to make progress on North Korea, official says](#)

July 17, 2021, The Japan Times

The United States will have to work with China to make progress on North Korea, a senior State Department official said Friday, ahead of a top U.S. diplomat's visit to the region.

[North Korea blasts Japan over claim to Dokdo](#)

July 17, 2021, The Korea Times

North Korea lashed out at Japan, Saturday, for its claim to Dokdo, two South Korean islets in the East Sea calling it a shameless act.

[S. Korea, APEC members vow to overcome pandemic through fair vaccine distribution](#)

July 16, 2021, The Korea Times

South Korea and other member states of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) on Friday agreed to work toward accelerating the region's economic recovery by facilitating fair distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

[S. Korean, Israeli leaders agree on closer ties in response to COVID-19](#)

July 16, 2021, The Korea Times

The leaders of South Korea and Israel agreed during phone talks Friday to strengthen cooperation in efforts to overcome the COVID-19 crisis.

[Foreign ministry calls on Chinese envoy to be 'cautious' after remarks on presidential front-runner](#)

July 17, 2021, The Korea Times

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs made an implicit call Saturday for Chinese Ambassador to South Korea Xing Haiming to be "cautious" after his comments on a presidential front-runner raised questions over whether they could be construed as political interference.

## Southeast Asia

### [Why US-China Rivalry Might Be Good for Singapore's Semiconductor Industry](#)

July 13, 2021, The Diplomat

Global chip-makers are diversifying their supply chains to hedge against the risks of growing geopolitical competition.

### [Chinese-U.S. Split Is Forcing Singapore to Choose Sides](#)

July 14, 2021, Foreign Policy

In recent years, China has been subjecting Singapore to greater pressure. It is pushing the island to make a choice between the two great powers and is working hard to influence Singaporeans to take a more accommodating position toward Beijing.

### [U.S. rejects China maritime claims, calls for ASEAN action on Myanmar](#)

July 14, 2021, Reuters

The United States rejects China's "unlawful" maritime claims in the South China Sea and stands with Southeast Asian countries facing Chinese "coercion", Secretary of State Antony Blinken said.

### [US Focuses on Myanmar, South China Sea at Special ASEAN Meeting](#)

July 15, 2021, The Diplomat

The meeting highlighted where U.S. and Southeast Asian interests align, and where they part ways.

### [South China Sea ruling was not just empty words](#)

July 16, 2021, The Japan Times

Five years ago last Thursday, an international tribunal dismissed China's claims to sovereignty over vast expanses of the South China Sea.

### [Philippines warns about sewage from ships squatting in South China Sea](#)

July 16, 2021, Yahoo News

A fleet of Chinese vessels squatting in the disputed waters of the South China Sea is damaging the environment with a stream of sewage, according to satellite imagery that has Beijing steaming and provoked a complaint from Philippine officials.

### [China military 'drove away' US warship in South China Sea](#)

July 12, 2021, Al Jazeera

China's military said it "drove away" a United States warship that it said illegally entered Chinese waters near the disputed Paracel Islands on Monday, the



anniversary of a landmark international court ruling that Beijing has no claim over the South China Sea.

[China operating military flights from South China Sea bases: Report](#)

July 14, 2021, Hindustan Times

As China begins the construction of world's first commercial small modular reactor (SMR), the country's military has deployed electronic warning and surveillance aircraft and helicopters on two disputed islands in the South China Sea.

## Central & West Asia

### Central Asia

#### [Turkmenistan Sending Heavy Weaponry, Aircraft To Afghan Border Amid Deteriorating Security](#)

July 11, 2021, RFE/RL

Turkmenistan has begun moving heavy weaponry, helicopters, and other aircraft closer to its border with Afghanistan, and reservists are being put on alert in the capital, a further sign of the worry spreading across Central Asia as Taliban fighters continue major offensives. A senior official at a Turkmen security agency said that more troops from an army garrison near the city of Mary are being sent to bolster border guard units.

#### [Turkmen Leader Promotes Son In Latest Signal Of Possible Succession](#)

July 11, 2021, RFE/RL

Turkmen state media say that President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov has promoted his son Serdar to a top government post with oversight of major economic and financial decisions. It is the latest in a series of promotions for the 39-year-old Serdar, who Berdymukhammedov appears to be grooming to succeed him in the future.

#### [Kyrgyzstan tightens control over NGOs, taps anti-Western sentiment](#)

July 12, 2021, Eurasianet

Kyrgyzstan's populist president has quietly signed a law that hinders the work of non-governmental organizations, mirroring Russia's latest restrictions. Civil society leaders see the new controls as a response to media investigations into high-level corruption and fear they could be used to cripple the work of independent activists.

#### [Russia Cautions Central Asia Against Hosting US Forces](#)

July 14, 2021, The Diplomat

Both Russia and the Taliban, separately, have warned the states of Central Asia against hosting U.S. forces following Washington's looming exit from Afghanistan. While it's clear that U.S. and Central Asian officials have been in consistent contact regarding Afghanistan, no formal announcements have been made regarding basing U.S. troops in the region or other forms of cooperation.

### [Kyrgyzstan Appeals For Help For Ethnic Kyrgyz Who Fled Afghanistan](#)

July 15, 2021, RFE/RL

The Kyrgyz Foreign Ministry has appealed to authorities in neighboring Tajikistan to facilitate the passage to their common border of hundreds of ethnic Kyrgyz who fled Afghanistan amid a major Taliban surge that is raising security concerns in neighboring former Soviet republics. The ministry also said on July 15 that it had turned to the United Nations for assistance in bringing to Kyrgyzstan ethnic Kyrgyz who entered Tajikistan from Afghanistan.

### [India, Uzbekistan not yet ready for payments in national currencies in SCO - Russian envoy](#)

July 11, 2021, TASS

India and Uzbekistan are not ready at the moment for mutual payments in national currencies within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) but do not refuse to take part in discussions on this topic, Bakhtiyer Khakimov, Russia's Special Presidential Envoy for SCO Affairs and the Russian Foreign Ministry's Ambassador at Large said in an interview.

### [Boosting Regional Connectivity To Be Focus Of High-Level Conference In Tashkent](#)

July 16, 2021, Outlook India

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani to discuss the evolving situation in the war-torn country and reiterated India's support for peace, stability, and development in the country. Jaishankar is on a visit to Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, as part of a Connectivity Conference, after attending a crucial meeting of foreign ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Dushanbe. He met Ghani at the sidelines of the multilateral event.

## **West Asia**

### [GI-certified Consignment of Fazli Mangoes from Malda Exported to Bahrain](#)

July 11, 2021, The Telegraph

Fazli mango growers are set to get new connoisseurs as a GI-certified consignment of the variety was exported to Bahrain from Bengal's Malda district.

### [India to Maintain Warships in Gulf Zone to Aid Merchant Ships](#)

July 05, 2021, The Times of India

India will continue to maintain a naval presence in the troubled Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman, which is aimed at protecting and reassuring Indian-flagged merchant vessels and oil tankers transiting through the region.

### [Greek FM Nikos Dendias Says India, Greece, UAE to Establish Trilateral Dialogue; Hits out at Turkey](#)

July 09, 2021, WION

Greek Foreign minister Nikos Dendias has said that India, Greece, and UAE will soon establish a trilateral dialogue even as Athens is working to "develop a Strategic Partnership" with New Delhi.

### [Not in Favour of Military Action, Committed to Syria-led Political Process: India at UN](#)

July 10, 2021, Hindustan Times

After voting in favour of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Syrian Humanitarian Resolution, India reaffirmed its commitment to a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned UN-facilitated political process, to help bring long term security in the conflict-ridden region.

### [U.S. Strikes Deal with Russia to Continue U.N. Syria Aid Access](#)

July 10, 2021, Reuters

The U.N. Security Council extended a cross-border aid operation into Syria from Turkey after Russia agreed to a compromise in last-minute talks with the United States, ensuring the delivery of humanitarian help to millions of Syrians for up to 12 months.

### [Saudi-UAE Rivalry Takes Shape amid OPEC+ Spat and Competing Hubs](#)

July 07, 2021, AL Jazeera

The United Arab Emirates' refusal to agree to a Saudi-backed plan to boost oil output is the latest in an emerging rivalry playing out between the two traditional Gulf allies as both countries seek to diversify their economies and manage a long-term transition away from the petroleum industry.

### [Turkey Emerging as One of the 'Biggest Competitors' of Russian Attack Drones, Armoured Vehicles](#)

July 05, 2021, Eurasian Times

Turkey is one of the main competitors of Russia in the manufacture of armoured vehicles for the foreign market, Igor Zarakhovich, chief designer of the Russian company AO Remdizel (JSC), said in an interview with Sputnik.

[Pakistan Eyes Drones & Deeper Ties with Turkey, Concerns in Delhi of Possible Triad with China](#)

July 07, 2021, The Print

Pakistan is seeking armed drones from Turkey and is looking to deepen the already strong bilateral cooperation, especially in the defence arena, even as both countries align on key issues including Kashmir and Afghanistan.

[US Sanctions 34 Companies with Links to China's Uyghur Policy, Ties with Iran, Russia](#)

July 09, 2021, WION

The Biden administration imposed sanctions against 34 companies and entities linked to China's military and policy towards the Uyghur minority including those involved with allowing exports to Russia and Iran.

[Iran Takes Steps to Make Enriched Uranium Metal; U.S., European Powers Dismayed](#)

July 07, 2021, Reuters

Iran has begun the process of producing enriched uranium metal, the U.N. atomic watchdog said, a move that could help it develop a nuclear weapon and that three European powers said threatened talks to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

[Hack Causes 'chaos' on Iran Trains, Posts Supreme Leader's Number for Complaints](#)

July 09, 2021, The Times of Israel

Iran's railroad system came under cyber-attack on Friday (July 09), a semi-official news agency reported, with hackers posting fake messages about alleged train delays or cancellations on display boards at stations across the country.

[Israel Aerospace Industries Signs MoU with Lockheed Martin for Alliance on Air-Defense](#)

July 06, 2021, Jewish News Syndicate

Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and Lockheed Martin announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for joint collaboration in the field of integrated air- and missile-defense (IAMD) systems.

## United States

### United States

#### [Biden and Merkel 'united against Russia aggression'](#)

July 15, 2021, BBC

The US and Germany will stand together against Russian aggression, President Joe Biden said as he welcomed outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel to Washington.

#### [Biden says U.S. reviewing European travel ban, sees update in coming days](#)

July 16, 2021, Reuters

President Joe Biden said on Thursday the United States is reviewing when it can lift restrictions that ban most non-U.S. citizens from traveling to the United States from much of Europe after German Chancellor Angela Merkel raised the issue.

#### [Blinken, Le Drian discuss EU-US efforts to combat Russia, China](#)

July 15, 2021, ANI

US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian called for joint US-European efforts to stand up to Russia and China, US State Department has said.

#### [Blinken Cites Xinjiang Abuses in Report on Global Atrocities](#)

July 13, 2021, Bloomberg

The U.S. State Department cited the Chinese government's crackdown on ethnic Uyghurs in the Xinjiang region as one of six places in the world that are witnessing or are at risk of atrocities and crimes against humanity, as the U.S. explores new ways to try to prevent such violence.

#### [U.S. rejects China maritime claims, calls for ASEAN action on Myanmar](#)

July 14, 2021, Reuters

The United States rejects China's "unlawful" maritime claims in the South China Sea and stands with Southeast Asian countries facing Chinese "coercion", Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Wednesday.

#### [Biden Says Situation in Hong Kong Deteriorating](#)

July 15, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

President Biden said the situation in Hong Kong is "deteriorating" as the administration prepares to issue an advisory to businesses that he said would lay out what may happen as China furthers its crackdown on the territory.

[Blinken lays out pillars for cyber diplomacy, says 'our democratic values and way of life' are at stake](#)

July 13, 2021, CNN

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke Tuesday of the importance of diplomacy in dealing with cybersecurity and technology matters, noting that "our democratic values and way of life" are "fundamentally what's at stake here."

[Democrats Roll Out \\$3.5 Trillion Budget to Fulfill Biden's Broad Agenda](#)

July 14, 2021, The New York Times

President Biden and congressional Democrats vowed on Wednesday to push through a \$3.5 trillion budget blueprint to vastly expand social and environmental programs by extending the reach of education and health care, taxing the rich and tackling the warming of the planet.

[Biden: US will protect Haiti embassy, won't send troops](#)

July 15, 2021, Associated Press

President Joe Biden said Thursday that the U.S. will bolster security at its embassy in Haiti following last week's assassination of that country's president, but sending American troops to stabilize the country was "not on the agenda."

[Biden says Cuba is a 'failed state' and calls communism 'a universally failed system'](#)

July 15, 2021, CNN

President Joe Biden said on Thursday that Cuba is a "failed state" and called communism a "failed system" as protests play out against the Caribbean nation's repressive regime.

[Blinken Invites the U.N. to Investigate America](#)

July 15, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

The Secretary of State welcomes the Human Rights Council that includes Cuba, China and Russia to opine on systemic racism in the U.S.

[Biden's Afghan blunder](#)

July 14, 2021, The Japan Times

Afghanistan is on the brink of catastrophe and it is U.S. President Joe Biden's fault. By overruling America's top generals and ordering the hasty withdrawal of U.S. troops, Biden opened the way for Taliban terrorists to capture more than a quarter of Afghanistan's districts.

## [The Current State of U.S.-China Relations](#)

July 15, 2021, The Heritage Foundation

China is pursuing its global ambitions more aggressively than ever before. But it's important to remember that China's weaknesses are greater than its strengths. And China is a lonely power.



## Europe & Russia

### Europe

#### [U.S. Competition Policy Is Aligning with Europe, and Deeper Cooperation Could Follow](#)

July 15, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

The European Union's top antitrust regulator foresees greater alignment with the U.S. on competition enforcement, particularly in the tech sector, amid a broader policy reorientation under the Biden administration.

#### [Europe's climate plans could provoke friction with U.S.](#)

July 16, 2021, Washington Post

The Biden administration has spent its first months in office rallying allies and partners to the cause of global climate action after the hiatus of the Trump years. But Europe is racing ahead with measures that could, in theory, provoke friction with the United States.

#### [EU unveils sweeping climate change plan](#)

July 15, 2021, BBC

The European Union has announced a raft of climate change proposals aimed at pushing it towards its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2050.

#### [Climate-focused investors give warm welcome to EU masterplan](#)

July 15, 2021, Reuters

A European Union climate masterplan to raise the cost of pollution and eliminate emissions is a step towards a single carbon price that many investors striving to make companies more sustainable say can help to engineer deeper change.

#### [EU executive takes legal action against Hungary, Poland over LGBT rights](#)

July 15, 2021, Reuters

The European Commission launched legal action against Hungary over measures it said discriminated against LGBT people, stepping up a battle over values with Prime Minister Viktor Orban that could hold up EU funding for Budapest.

### [Poland Escalates Fight with Europe Over the Rule of Law](#)

July 15, 2021, The New York Times

Poland has escalated a six-year struggle with the European Union over the rule of law after the country's constitutional court ruled it did not have to comply with an order from the bloc's supreme court over its oversight of judges.

### [UK parliament backs foreign aid cut after PM Johnson sees off rebellion](#)

July 13, 2021, Reuters

Britain will go ahead with a temporary cut to its foreign aid budget after Prime Minister Boris Johnson defeated a rebellion in parliament on Tuesday by lawmakers in his Conservative Party.

### [Police seize record \\$249 million of cryptocurrency in UK](#)

July 13, 2021, CNN

Almost £180 million (\$249 million) in cryptocurrency has been seized by London's Metropolitan Police -- the biggest confiscation in the UK, the force said.

### [British Defence Minister says UK will work with Taliban should they come to power](#)

July 14, 2021, Reuters

Britain will work with the Taliban should they enter the government in Afghanistan, British Defence Minister Ben Wallace told the Daily Telegraph in an interview published on Tuesday.

### [EU Agrees on Infrastructure Plan to Rival China's New Silk Road](#)

July 13, 2021, Voice of America

European Union foreign ministers agreed Monday on an ambitious global infrastructure plan linking Europe to the world. The infrastructure scheme is designed to rival Chinese President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative, which Western governments fear encourages countries to take on large Chinese loans that can then be leveraged by Beijing for political purposes.

## **Russia**

### [Russia's Election Chief Denies Delay Of State Duma Vote Being Considered](#)

July 10, 2021, RFE/RL

The head of Russia's Central Election Commission has denied reports that the country's upcoming State Duma elections could be postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. "There have been no discussions about a possible

postponement of the election," Ella Pamfilova told the state news agency TASS on July 10.

### [U.S., Russia Say Will Cooperate on Climate](#)

July 12, 2021, The Moscow Times

The U.S. and Russia said on July 12 they would cooperate on climate change despite strained relations, during a visit to Moscow by U.S. climate envoy John Kerry. Kerry, the former secretary of state who has become U.S. President Joe Biden's globe-trotting climate envoy, said "the stakes could not be higher" as he met with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

### [RDIF, Serum Institute of India to Start Sputnik Vaccine Production in September](#)

July 13, 2021, Sputnik News

The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) and the Serum Institute of India (SII) will start production of the Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine in September, according to a joint statement published on July 13. The sides plan to produce more than 300 million doses of Sputnik Vaccine in India per year.

### [Putin Voices Concerns About 'Anti-Russia' Project, Elaborates on Russian-Ukrainian Relations](#)

July 13, 2021, Sputnik News

Russian President Vladimir Putin has written an extensive article pondering the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians, releasing it earlier in the week. The Ukrainian president, however, did not appear to share the sentiment and rejected Putin's belief that Ukrainians and Russians are "brotherly" people.

### [Russian Envoy for Afghanistan Warns of Consequences if Taliban Undermine Regional Security](#)

July 14, 2021, Sputnik News

The Russian president's special envoy for Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, has said that any attempt by the Taliban to undermine security in Central Asia would lead to grave consequences. The diplomat noted that serious negotiations between the government and the Taliban should not be expected before the fall.

### [Russia Bans Independent Investigative Outlet Proekt with 'Undesirable' Label](#)

July 15, 2021, The Moscow Times

Russia has added independent investigative outlet Proekt to its registry of "undesirable" organizations, a designation that bans the outlet's activities and puts its staff at risk of jail time, and labeled several of its journalists "foreign

agents." The Prosecutor General's office added Proekt to its "undesirable foreign NGOs" registry, saying the outlet's work threatens "the foundations of the constitutional order and security of the Russian Federation."

### [Russia Races to Build Giant Icebreakers for Arctic Dominance](#)

July 15, 2021, The Moscow Times

At St. Petersburg's historic Baltic Shipyard, cranes hover over the shining Neva River as hundreds of workers build four nuclear-powered icebreakers. Fronted by a Russian flag and named after the country's northern regions, the giant vessels are meant to ensure Moscow's dominance over the melting Arctic.

### [Lavrov lauds Russian-Chinese ties: 'Relations have reached unprecedented heights'](#)

July 16, 2021, TASS News Agency

Russian-Chinese relations have reached an unprecedentedly high level, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an op-ed for Russia's Rossiyskaya Gazeta newspaper and China's People's Daily, dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the Russian-Chinese Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation.

## Africa & Latin America

### Latin America

#### [Cubans tired of shortages, stage historic large-scale protests](#)

July 12, 2021, MercoPress

Scores of impoverished Cubans took to the streets of nearly every city in the country Sunday to protest against the shortages in food, electricity and medicines, in addition to the already usual restrictions upon individual liberties. Demonstrators chanted "I want freedom" or "we are not afraid" in what was said to be the biggest anti-government protest in 30 years. But this time around, they added "I want vaccines," as a surge in coronavirus cases and low immunization rates has added the hardships Cubans are used to enduring.

#### [Argentina signs agreement to purchase 20 million doses of Moderna vaccine](#)

July 12, 2021, MercoPress

Argentine authorities have announced Sunday that an agreement had been signed with Moderna Inc for the supply of 20 million doses of their vaccine against Covid-19. "We are taking a key step in our strategy of having all possible technological platforms, while we continue negotiations with other laboratories", said Health Minister Carla Vizzotti.

#### [Volkswagen picks Uruguay to make e-cars Latin American landing](#)

July 14, 2021, MercoPress

The traditional German automaker Volkswagen has chosen Uruguay as the first country in Latin America to receive its assortment of fully electricity-powered models, it was announced during a ceremony which was attended by President Luis Lacalle Pou. So far, only some hybrid models have been sold in Argentina (Touareg Hybrid) and Brazil (Golf GTE).

#### [Brazil: Bolsonaro flown to São Paulo for possible emergency surgery](#)

July 15, 2021, MercoPress

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has been rushed late Wednesday from Brasilia to a São Paulo hospital after being diagnosed with an intestinal obstruction which might require emergency surgery, it was reported. Bolsonaro had been admitted into the Armed Forces Hospital in the country's capital early Wednesday due to abdominal pain and presenting persistent hiccups.

[Search for possible interment of Argentine combatant at Falklands' Teal Inlet agreed by UK and Argentina](#)

July 16, 2021, MercoPress

Argentina and the UK together with the International Committee of the Red Cross subscribed on Thursday in Geneva the international instruments to advance in the search and identification of a possible interment at the Teal Inlet, in the Falkland Islands, that could hold remains of non-identified Argentine combatants.

## **Africa**

[China, glossing its own human rights record, praises UN racism move](#)

July 14, 2021, Africa Times

China has weighed in on a United Nations Human Rights Council resolution on racism and discrimination first introduced by African nations, but made no mention of the ongoing inquiries into its own treatment of Uyghur and other minorities. Zhao Lijian, spokesman for the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said Wednesday that the resolution – explicitly linked with the death of George Floyd in the United States last year – addresses “the scourge of systemic and structural racism” found in the U.S. and around the world. As is often the case, Zhao positioned China as standing apart from the colonialism and slave trade in Africa for which the U.S. and Europe were responsible.

[Botswana issues travel warning over South Africa violence, eSwatini](#)

July 13, 2021, Africa Times

The government of Botswana issued a travel advisory for South Africa on Tuesday because of violent protests that followed former president Jacob Zuma’s surrender to authorities and subsequent imprisonment.

[IOM sees increase in Mediterranean migrant deaths](#)

July 15, 2021, Africa Times

At least 1,146 people died while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea in the first six months of 2021, according to a new report from IOM, the United Nations agency on migration. That’s more than twice the number seen during the same period in 2020, although the COVID-19 pandemic likely reduced the normal flow of migrants trying to reach Europe from North Africa.

### [Algeria's automobile industry is going through a dry spell](#)

July 12, 2021, The African Report

Disrupted by the Algerian authorities' drastic measures to promote an industrial boom, the automobile market has shrunk to the point of collapse, greatly displeasing dealers, manufacturers and consumers.

### [Africa: Which countries charge the most for internet data?](#)

July 13, 2021, The African Report

Despite the installation of submarine cables to connect the continent, the price of a gig of mobile internet data remains very high on average. Although Africa's digital divide is narrowing, the cost of the internet is struggling to come down. On 30 June, the last section of the Africa Coast to Europe (ACE) submarine cable – which links France to South Africa and connects 10 African countries, including Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana – was put into service.

### [Covid-19: Africa's game-changing variants](#)

July 12, 2021, The African Report

Will Africa's third coronavirus wave be its most deadly? Many people are beginning to fear that it will be, following the latest report on new cases and deaths as well as the list of countries that have seen a sharp rise in numbers. "The rampant spread of more contagious variants is dramatically changing the nature of the threat to Africa," World Health Organisation's (WHO) Africa director Matshidiso Moeti said on 1 July, adding that the third wave is "unlike anything we have seen so far".

### [EU 'not satisfied' with Ethiopian unilateral decisions on Nile dam: Egyptian minister](#)

July 13, 2021, Arab News

The EU has offered its expertise to help resolve the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) impasse after the bloc's member countries expressed dissatisfaction at unilateral decisions taken by Ethiopia in relation to the project, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry has revealed.



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