



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



Volume V, Issue 31 | August 1, 2021

Delhi Policy Group

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

www.delhipolicygroup.org



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH Volume V, Issue 31

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

DPG Weekly World Watch is based on analysis of open source information. To subscribe please [click here](#).

Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Angana Guha Roy at angana@dpg.org.in.

© 2021 by the Delhi Policy Group

Delhi Policy Group

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

Contents

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| South Asia..... | 1 |
| East & South East Asia | 8 |
| Central & West Asia | 14 |
| United States..... | 18 |
| Europe & Russia | 21 |
| Africa & Latin America | 25 |

South Asia

India

[To deal with China on LAC, India must downsize and restructure the armed forces](#)

July 29, 2021, The Print

There is optimism in the air with respect to the proposed 12th round of Corps Commander–level talks between India and China that are likely to be held in near future. As per anonymous government/military sources, a deal is likely to be struck for disengagement in the Gogra-Hot Springs area.

[One soldier per family: China recruiting Tibetans in PLA for deployment at LAC](#)

July 30, 2021

China has started recruiting Tibetans in People's Liberation Army (PLA) for deployment at LAC. It has been made mandatory for every Tibetan family to send one member to the PLA.

[India patrolled Depsang till months before LAC standoff](#)

July 28, 2021, The Indian Express

Although government officials expect a possible breakthrough in the 12th round of Corps Commander-level talks to be held soon on Gogra and Hot Springs, the two friction points where China continues to have platoon-sized troop strength on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), another sticking issue – related to Depsang Plains – is likely to take more time to resolve.

[Vice Admiral SN Ghormade assumes charge as Indian Navy's vice chief](#)

July 31, 2021, India Today

Vice Admiral SN Ghormade assumed charge as the Vice Chief of Naval Staff at a formal ceremony held at South Block in New Delhi on Saturday morning. Vice Admiral SN Ghormade takes over from Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar who retires today after a service of 39 years.

[Indian, Russian navies conclude Exercise Indra Navy in Baltic Sea](#)

July 30, 2021, The Hindu

The navies of India and Russia concluded the 12th edition of the biennial Exercise Indra Navy in Baltic Sea, the Navy said. The Army version of the exercise is scheduled to be held from August 1 to 13 in Volgograd.

[US commander Richard Clarke holds talk with Indian defence officials](#)

July 29, 2021, Mint

The Commander of US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), General Richard D. Clarke held talks with Indian defence and military officials in New Delhi, a day after a visit by the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to India.

[Peace, prosperity can't coexist with terrorism: Rajnath Singh at SCO meet](#)

July 29, 2021, The Indian Express

Peace and prosperity cannot coexist with terrorism, and any act of terror is a crime against humanity, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said during his address at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' Meeting in Tajikistan.

Pakistan

[PM rules out use of force against Afghan Taliban](#)

July 30, 2021, Dawn

Prime Minister Imran Khan has said his government can do everything to prod the Afghan Taliban to end violence and agree to a negotiated settlement of the dispute in their country except for coercive action against them on Pakistani territory.

[Pakistan Stream Gas Pipeline: Pakistan wants Russia to increase shareholding up to 49pc](#)

July 28, 2021, The News

In a shocking development, Pakistan has asked Russia that it has no money to fully fund its 74 percent shareholding in the \$3 billion project of Pakistan Steam Gas Pipeline (PSGP) and asked Moscow to raise debt financing up to \$1.4 billion against its shareholding for the project raising eyebrows of many if the huge amount of Rs 295 billion (\$1.83 billion) collected in the head of GIDC (gas infrastructure development cess) by Finance Ministry till August 2020 has been utilized by the government.

[S. Arabia, Pakistan working for peace: COAS](#)

July 29, 2021, Dawn

Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa has said that relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are based on bonds of brotherhood and mutual trust and both nations would continue to play their part for peace and stability. The army chief expressed these views during a meeting with Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud.

[Islamabad, Riyadh vow to work for stability in S. Asia, ME](#)

July 28, 2021, Dawn

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan vowed to take bilateral ties to new heights under a strategic direction set by the top leadership of the two countries in May this year. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud, while speaking at a press conference with his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi following delegation-level talks between the two sides, expressed Riyadh's keen desire to bolster relationship with Islamabad and said the kingdom was looking to expand the dimensions of relationship with Pakistan through the Saudi-Pakistan Supreme Coordination Council (SP-SCC).

[Pakistan, China negotiating financing accord of ML-1](#)

July 28, 2021, The News

Pakistan has formally asked China for providing loans for construction of the much-awaited Mainline-1 (ML-1) of rail line from Karachi to Peshawar in USD instead of Chinese RMB currency or a combination of both currencies could be acceptable for moving forward. Pakistani authorities have communicated five major points to Beijing officially for evolving consensus on financing agreement for the construction of multi-billion dollar strategically important ML-1 project under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

[SBP expects current account deficit to be 2-3pc](#)

July 28, 2021, Dawn

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has kept the policy rate unchanged at 7 per cent in the hope that the current account deficit will remain in the range of 2 to 3pc of GDP in FY22. Announcing the Monetary Policy for the next two months here, SBP Governor Dr Reza Baqir said: "Given expected resilience in remittances and an improving outlook for exports, the current account deficit is expected to converge towards a sustainable range of 2-3pc of GDP in FY22."

[Chinese ban on nine firms hits Pakistan's fish exports](#)

July 25, 2021, Dawn

A number of Pakistani companies have been facing a temporary ban on exports of fish and fish preparations to China since January after detection of coronavirus in their shipments.

Qadri Noori Enterprise chief executive officer Manzar Alam told that around 50 companies have been exporting fish to China. Out of top 15 exporters, some nine firms are now temporarily banned by the Chinese authorities.

[China, Pakistan call for ceasefire in Afghanistan](#)

July 25, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan and China called on all Afghan stakeholders to agree on a comprehensive ceasefire and work together to achieve a broad-based, inclusive and negotiated political settlement. The call was made by the two sides as Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi held the third session of the foreign ministers' strategic dialogue in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province, China.

[Nawaz-Afghan NSA meeting stirs up political storm](#)

July 25, 2021, Dawn

A political storm has erupted over a meeting between Afghan National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme leader and ex-premier Nawaz Sharif when the pictures of the meeting were released by the National Security Council of Afghanistan. The Afghan NSC tweeted the pictures along with a statement a day after the meeting took place in London.

[Arab country facilitated Nawaz-Mohib London meeting: source](#)

July 25, 2021, The News

A Middle Eastern Islamic country arranged former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's meeting with Afghan National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib, according to a trusted source. The News has learnt from the credible source that a diplomat from the Middle Eastern Arab country spoke to Nawaz Sharif and floated the idea of meeting the Afghan NSA during his London visit to meet the UK's political and military leadership besides meeting with politicians and ambassadors from several countries.

[Afghan situation: Pak, US NSAs agree to sustain bilateral cooperation](#)

July 30, 2021, The Express Tribune

Pakistan National Security Adviser (NSA) Dr Moeed Yusuf and his US counterpart Jake Sullivan discussed the 'urgent need for a reduction in violence in Afghanistan' and agreed to 'sustain the momentum in Pak-US bilateral cooperation' during a meeting in Washington.

Afghanistan

[Taliban start collecting taxes in Spin Boldak, Wesh areas](#)

July 28, 2021, Dawn

Taliban, who captured the Afghan border district of Spin Boldak early this month, imposed new tariff and started collecting taxes on goods coming into Afghanistan or going to Pakistan, a day after Pakistan reopened the border for trade activities after a suspension of over two weeks because of the fighting between Taliban and Afghan security troops.

[No peace till Ghani's removal from power: Taliban spokesman](#)

July 24, 2021, Dawn

The Taliban say they don't want to monopolise power, but they insist there won't be peace in Afghanistan until there is a new negotiated government in Kabul and President Ashraf Ghani is removed. In an interview, Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen, who is also a member of the group's negotiating team, laid out the insurgents' stance on what should come next in a country on the precipice.

[Afghan Government Facing 'Existential Crisis'](#)

July 29, 2021, VOA

The Afghan government in Kabul will be fighting for its life and could well fall to the Taliban after the United States completes its military withdrawal from the country in August, according to a U.S. government watchdog charged with monitoring events on the ground. Despite a series of cautiously optimistic assessments by high-ranking U.S. military officials and Afghan leaders, a new report from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) describes the situation as "bleak" and echoes concern that Afghan security forces are not ready to mount any meaningful resistance.

[Taliban Takeover Would Make Afghanistan 'Pariah State': Blinken](#)

July 28, 2021, Tolo News

The US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters in India that Afghanistan would become a "pariah state" if the government commits atrocities against its own population. "An Afghanistan that does not respect the rights of its people, an Afghanistan that commits atrocities against its own people would become a pariah state," Blinken said. He said that the violence carried out by the Taliban against the Afghan people was deeply troubling and not a good sign for the future of the country.

[U.S. General Won't Commit to Ending Airstrikes on Taliban](#)

July 25, 2021, The NYT

The top American general overseeing operations in Afghanistan declined to say whether U.S. airstrikes against the Taliban would end Aug. 31, the date previously given by officials as a cutoff for such attacks. Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., the head of United States Central Command, refused to commit to ending the United States last remaining military leverage over the Taliban: airstrikes.

[U.S. FAA issues new flight restrictions over Afghanistan](#)

July 27, 2021, Reuters

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said it has imposed new flight restrictions over Afghanistan for U.S. airlines and other U.S. operators in response to the changing security environment.

[Next High-Level Meeting on Peace Expected in August: Sources](#)

July 25, 2021, Tolo News

The next meeting of high-level delegations from both the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban will take place at the beginning of next month, sources close to the negotiating teams in Doha said. The first meeting was held on July 16 and lasted for two days, during which delegates agreed to continue their meetings and expedite the peace efforts. However, attendees failed to reach an agreement on a ceasefire.

[Strong convergence on Indian, U.S. positions on Afghanistan, says Jaishankar](#)

July 29, 2021, The Hindu

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar told the Rajya Sabha that India would not accept any outcome in Afghanistan that was decided by force and that there was "strong convergence" on this between India and the United States.

[As China Props Up Taliban, India & US Send Joint Message Against 'Forceful Takeover' of Afghanistan](#)

July 29, 2021, News 18

India will work with the international community to ensure political negotiations are pursued seriously, said External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar following his meeting with US State Secretary Antony Blinken in New Delhi. Blinken and Jaishankar reportedly had detailed discussions on the situation in Afghanistan in the meeting.

Bangladesh

[How economic integration could help India and Bangladesh fulfil the expectations of their people](#)

July 31, 2021, Dhaka Tribune

Bangladesh's economic growth means that New Delhi needs a new approach. Media narratives that describe foreign power and influence over Dhaka gaslight Bangladeshis. Those narratives don't speak of their experience.

[Bangladesh urges Russia to mediate in Rohingya crisis after China-led efforts fail](#)

July 25, 2021, The Economic Times

Bangladesh has approached Russia to use its good offices with Myanmar's junta to bring them around to taking back Rohingya refugees, after a China-led effort failed in facilitating it.

Nepal

[11 drones recovered along Nepal border in Bihar](#)

July 29, 2021, Hindustan Times

The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) has recovered 11 drones from an alleged smuggler along the India-Nepal border in Bihar's Madhubani district, an officer said.

[Nepal faces competing territorial claims from both India, China](#)

July 28, 2021, WION

Assuring to solve the border dispute with both India and China in a diplomatic manner, Nepali Congress leader Minendra Rijal and a former Minister of Information and Communication said the evidences stand strong and Nepal has rightfully claimed over the territories.

Sri Lanka

[Are Pakistan-Sri Lanka Ties Emerging From India's Shadow?](#)

July 30, 2021, The Diplomat

From Imran Khan's visit to stronger trade ties, Pakistan's much-touted shift from geopolitics to geoeconomics is on display in Sri Lanka.

East & South East Asia

China

[Yuan expands in China-Russia trade amid US financial sanctions](#)

July 30, 2021, Global Times

Amid Russia's de-dollarization efforts, the Chinese yuan's share in China-Russia bilateral trade has risen from 3.1 percent in 2014 to 17.5 percent in 2020, Chinese Ambassador to Russia Zhang Hanhui said in an interview with Russian media.

[UK shouldn't tempt own fate in South China Sea: Global Times editorial](#)

July 29, 2021, Global Times

The UK's Queen Elizabeth carrier strike group on Sunday entered the South China Sea through the Strait of Malacca. It has not so far done anything particular that can attract the focus of public attention.

[US warships' Taiwan Straits transit, S.China Sea drill futile to contain China: observers](#)

July 29, 2021, Global Times

A series of provocative moves by the US including sending a warship through the Taiwan Straits and holding a separate exercise in the South China Sea on Wednesday amid US officials' tours to Asia are an attempt to contain China not only politically but also militarily, but the tactic won't succeed because the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) holds unrivaled advantages on its doorsteps, Chinese analysts said.

[Chinese military to host, compete in International Army Games 2021](#)

July 30, 2021, Global Times

The Chinese military will host some events of the 2021 International Army Games (IAG) in China from Aug. 22 to Sept. 4, a Chinese defence spokesperson said at a press conference.

[PLA sea, land and air forces hold cross-sea exercises amid Taiwan secessionist moves](#)

July 25, 2021, Global Times

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) continued intensive cross-sea exercises featuring sea, land and air forces amid the recent moves by Taiwan's secessionists to collude with external forces.

[New highs seen for nation's trade with Northeast Asia](#)

July 31, 2021, China Daily

China's foreign trade with Russia and the Republic of Korea is expected to hit new highs this year, driven by enhanced economic integration in Northeast Asia and their complementary goods trade structure, senior government officials said.

[China seizes locally made maps showing Aksai Chin, Arunachal in India](#)

July 30, 2021, Hindustan Times

Chinese customs recently seized a large consignment of locally manufactured world maps, which showed Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh as part of India.

[India, China to hold 12th round of Corps Commander-level talks on July 31](#)

July 31, 2021, The Hindu

India and China are scheduled to hold the 12th round of Corps Commander-level talks on Saturday with the focus on working out an agreement for the second phase of disengagement from Gogra and Hot Springs in Eastern Ladakh.

[How China Played American Investors](#)

July 29, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

Wall Street this week received a shock lesson in "capitalism with Chinese characteristics," as Beijing's preferred market setup is often described. The shares of many Chinese companies listed in New York and other foreign markets plummeted because it turns out that model never involved much actual capitalism.

[US should have bases in Taiwan](#)

July 31, 2021, Taipei Times

It is Washington's responsibility to avoid wars by applying enough deterrent. The US has been able to keep the peace for more than 50 years by placing a substantial number of forces in Europe and South Korea. Where can the US deploy such forces in East Asia to deter an invasion of Taiwan by China?

[As China absorbs Hong Kong, why do both get Olympic teams?](#)

July 30, 2021, AP

Two teams, from two Chinese cities, confronting each other on a badminton court, thwacking the shuttlecock back and forth. China's double-teaming of the Olympics — the equivalent, say, of the United States fielding both a national team and another of athletes solely from New York — has never been much of

an issue at the Olympics and isn't becoming one so far in Tokyo. But two things are happening that could weigh on the equation.

['They Have My Sister': As Uyghurs Speak Out, China Targets Their Families](#)

July 27, 2021, The New York Times,

As Beijing has intensified its repression in Xinjiang in recent years, more Uyghurs living overseas have felt compelled to speak out about mass internment camps and other abuses against their families back home. Their testimonies have added to a growing body of evidence of China's crackdown, which some have called a genocide, prompting foreign governments to impose sanctions.

Japan

[Japan successfully tests rocket engine propelled by new technology](#)

July 27, 2021, The Japan Times

Japan successfully tested a rocket engine that was propelled by new technology using shock waves produced by burning a mixture of methane and oxygen gases, with the aim of applying the propulsion method to deep space exploration in the future, the country's space agency said.

[Japanese drone major ACSL ties up with India's Arc Ventures](#)

July 26, 2021, The Times of India

Japan's largest drone manufacturer, ACSL, is entering the Indian market in collaboration with Delhi based Arc ventures.

[China threatens to nuke Japan over Taiwan in video: Report](#)

July 20, 2021, Hindustan Times

In recent months, Japan has expressed alarm over China's territorial ambitions in the region, including Taiwan. It has been seeking to expand and deepen security ties with other nations.

[Japan, U.S. informed by Seoul on reopening of inter-Korean communications](#)

July 30, 2021, The Japan Times

South Korea informed Japan and the United States via diplomatic channels before announcing earlier this week its agreement with North Korea to restore inter-Korean communications lines, Japanese and South Korean diplomatic sources said.

[Japan's new defence posture sparks Beijing backlash](#)

July 30, 2021, Defence Connect

Japan released its latest defence white paper — Defense of Japan 2021 — which largely promotes continuity from the policy framework established by Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's predecessor, Shinzo Abe.

[Tokyo Lobs the Ball Back at Beijing](#)

July 26, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

Japan's Jun Mizutani and Mima Ito shocked reigning champion China by winning the gold medal in mixed doubles table tennis Monday. But Tokyo's increasingly aggressive pushback against Chinese pressure on Taiwan is causing more heartburn in Beijing than lost Olympic glory.

Korea

[Kim Jong Un Pays Tribute To China's War Dead In North Korea](#)

July 29, 2021, Outlook India

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un paid tribute to China's war dead at a Pyongyang memorial and vowed to maintain firm ties with Beijing, state media reported Thursday, as he seeks to bolster relations with his country's main ally amid deepening hardships linked to the pandemic.

[China's Xi Vows to 'Defend' and 'Develop' North Korea Ties as Kim Rallies Army](#)

July 30, 2021, Newsweek

Chinese President Xi Jinping has vowed to defend and develop his country's alliance with North Korea, according to a letter addressed to Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un, who has rallied military leadership for a first-ever workshop on the political leadership of the armed forces.

[Japan–South Korea Olympic diplomacy over before it began](#)

July 26, 2021, East Asia Forum

Despite the long list of problems associated with the Tokyo 2020 Olympics — corruption, scandals, budget overruns, a year's long delay due to COVID-19 and widespread public opposition — the event continues to be billed as a 'festival of peace.'

[Explained: Why South Korea's version of Israel's Iron Dome will be more capable](#)

July 28, 2021, The Indian Express

South Korea's defence procurement agency announced that it had approved plans to develop an artillery interception system, similar to Israel's Iron Dome. This new defence system will be designed and built specifically to thwart attacks by rockets and long-range missiles launched by North Korea.

[North Korea's economy shrinks 4.5% in 2020 amid pandemic: BOK](#)

July 31, 2021, The Korea Times

North Korea's economy is estimated to contract 4.5 percent year-on-year in 2020, marking the worst contraction since 1997, as Pyongyang closed its borders over the COVID-19 pandemic, South Korea's central bank said.

Southeast Asia

[UK says it has no plans for South China Sea confrontation after Beijing warning](#)

July 30, 2021, The Guardian

Britain has said it has no plans to stage a naval confrontation with China in the South China Sea and that it aims to send its carrier strike group in the most direct route across the contested body of water from Singapore to the Philippine Sea.

[China issues warning to the UK as carrier strike group approaches](#)

July 30, 2021, WION

China claims practically the whole 1.3 million-square-mile South China Sea as its sovereign territory, and it has blamed foreign warships for escalating tensions in the region.

[China-Europe rail gets Vietnam connection, but huge mode shift brings delays](#)

July 29, 2021, The Loadstar

Booming China-Europe rail freight has expanded to Vietnam, but high demand and bad weather means lengthy delays.

[US Defense Chief Seeks to Advance Ties with Vietnam](#)

July 29, 2021, VOA

U. S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin looked to improve military relations with Vietnam during talks Thursday. The two countries are slowly gaining closer ties as they watch China's activities in the South China Sea with growing concern.

[Navies of India, Indonesia undertake coordinated patrol in Indian Ocean](#)

July 30, 2021, Yahoo News

An Indian Naval Ship on Friday began a two-day coordinated patrol with an Indonesian Navy vessel in the Indian Ocean region, in an exercise that highlights a high degree of mutual trust, confidence, synergy and cooperation between the two friendly navies.

[US-Philippines alliance is back to counter China](#)

July 30, 2021, TRT World

The defence agreement between Washington and Manila is a key component of their decades-long alliance and it is also seen as a bulwark against China's growing clout in the South China Sea.

Central & West Asia

Central Asia

[Tajikistan Says It's Ready To Shelter Up To 100,000 Refugees From Afghanistan](#)

July 23, 2021, RFE/RL

Tajikistan has said it is ready to shelter up to 100,000 refugees from neighboring Afghanistan amid increasing security concerns in Central Asia over the fallout of the Taliban's territorial gains in the northern part of the war-torn country. Imomali Ibrohimzoda, the first deputy chief of the Committee for Emergency and Civil Defense, said that if the number of Afghan refugees exceeds that number, Dushanbe will turn to international groups for help.

[Kazakhstan bans agro exports amid drought](#)

July 26, 2021, Eurasianet

Kazakhstan has imposed a six-month ban on the export of livestock fodder as the country continues to be gripped by a drought precipitated by unusually extended periods of hot weather. The policy will grant relief to some parts of the agricultural sector, but generate frustration among crop growers.

[Taliban Puts Tajik Militants Partially In Charge Of Afghanistan's Northern Border](#)

July 27, 2021, RFE/RL

When the Taliban captured a strategically important security checkpoint near Afghanistan's border with Tajikistan last month, it assigned a Tajik militant to raise the Taliban flag on the site. The militant goes by the alias Mahdi Arsalon and has a group of fighters from Tajikistan under his command. The Taliban also put Arsalon and his group in charge of security in five districts the Taliban seized near the Tajik border in recent months.

[Thirteen Kazakh Activists Go On Trial On Extremism Charges](#)

July 27, 2021, RFE/RL

Thirteen Kazakh opposition and rights activists, including four women, have gone on trial for their alleged links with the banned opposition Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (DVK) movement and its associated Koshe (Street) Party. The trial started on July 27 in a district court of the Central Asian nation's largest city, Almaty.

[Kyrgyz Lawmakers Approve Controversial Bill That Opponents Say Will Stifle Free Speech](#)

July 29, 2021, RFE/RL

Kyrgyz lawmakers have approved a controversial bill that they say is aimed at stopping the spread of fake news online, but which civil rights defenders and opposition activists fear is an attempt to stifle free speech. A total of 97 lawmakers voted for the bill on July 28, while five voted against it.

West Asia

[US Combat Forces to Leave Iraq by End of Year, Biden Says](#)

July 26, 2021, AL Jazeera

US President Joe Biden and Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi sealed an agreement formally ending the US combat mission in Iraq by the end of 2021, more than 18 years after US troops were sent to the country.

[US Considering New Sanctions on Iranian Oil Sales to China](#)

July 19, 2021, AL Jazeera

The United States is weighing new sanctions on Iran's oil sales to China as a way to pressure Tehran to commit to a nuclear deal.

[India Overhauls Petroleum Reserve Policy to Boost Private Interest: Report](#)

July 23, 2021, Mint

India has decided to commercialise half of its current strategic petroleum reserves (SPRs) as the nation looks to enhance private participation in the building of new storage facilities, two government sources said.

[India's Gold Trade Soars as Pandemic Recovery Continues](#)

July 21, 2021, Arabian Business

Gold seems to be shining again for Indian exporters as the country's exports of the yellow metal posted a massive 1,800 percent jump to \$1.16 billion during April-May period of this year from a meagre \$61.29 million in the same period last year.

['Israeli Cyber Sector is Under Attack,' Says NSO Group Chief](#)

July 23, 2021, Israel Hayom

NSO Group co-founder and CEO Shalev Hulio says the latest affair was created by "Qatar or the BDS movement - maybe both," and stresses that NSO Group

does not maintain lists of targets. "If anyone uses our software to spy on journalists, they won't be a customer anymore."

[IDF Asks for Budget Increase to Prepare Potential Attack against Iran's Nuclear Programme: Report](#)

July 15, 2021, WION

As Iran engages with Western powers over reviewing the 2015 nuclear deal, Israeli media reported that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have asked for a major budget increase to prepare for a potential attack against Iran's nuclear programme.

[Saudi Aramco Confirms Data Leak After Reports of Cyber Ransom](#)

July 21, 2021, AL Jazeera

Saudi Aramco confirmed that some company files were leaked after hackers reportedly demanded a \$50 million ransom from the world's most-valuable oil producer.

[United States Continued to Lead Global Petroleum and Natural Gas Production in 2020](#)

July 19, 2021, US Energy Information Administration

More petroleum and natural gas was produced in the United States than in any other country during 2020 (a trend that began in 2014), despite year-on-year declines from the record-high production in 2019. U.S. petroleum and natural gas output in 2020 totaled 66.9 quadrillion British thermal units (quads).

[Turkey Readies Part of Cyprus Ghost-town for Civilian Use](#)

July 22, 2021, Middle East Monitor

"A new era will begin in Maras which will benefit everyone," said Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, who visited breakaway Northern Cyprus on Tuesday. Maras is the Turkish name for 'Varosha'.

[India Backs Cyprus on Varosha Issue; Calls Turkey-backed Move 'concerning'](#)

July 22, 2021, WION

India has backed Cyprus and expressed its deep concern on a Turkey-backed move to open the ghost town of Varosha. Varosha was once a popular resort town but was abandoned after the 1974 invasion of the Mediterranean island by Turkey.

[NRI Businessman Yusuff Ali MA Selected to the Board of Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#)

July 25, 2021, The New Indian Express

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the crown prince of Abu Dhabi & Dy. Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces issued a resolution to form a new Board of Directors for Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ADCCI), chaired by Abdullah Mohamed Al Mazrouei and prominent Indian businessman Yusuff Ali MA as the vice-chairman.

['Most Fierce' Houthi Assault on Marib Foiled by Yemen Government, Coalition](#)

July 25, 2021, Arab News

Yemeni government troops and allied tribesmen, backed by Arab coalition jets, on Sunday (July 25) pushed back the "biggest and most fierce" Houthi assault in the central province of Marib since February.

United States

United States

[Blinken Sets Humble Tone in Asia as U.S. Aims to Boost Ties](#)

July 28, 2021, Bloomberg

The latest swing of senior U.S. officials through Asia indicates the Biden administration is taking a humbler tone in the region than the former president, with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken noting that every democracy was a "work in progress."

[There are few relationships globally that are more vital than one between US, India: Blinken](#)

July 29, 2021, Tribune

In reflection of growing bilateral ties between India and the US, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Wednesday held wide-ranging talks covering the situation in Afghanistan, Indo-Pacific engagements, Covid-19 response mechanism and ways to strengthen regional security.

[Blinken warns talks with Iran can't go on indefinitely](#)

July 29, 2021, CNN

Referring to the deal by its formal name, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the top US diplomat warned that time is running out to save the gains made by the 2015 agreement that offered Iran relief from sanctions and greater economic engagement in exchange for constraints on its nuclear program.

[1st Afghan interpreters to arrive in US as Blinken fails to reach deal in Kuwait](#)

July 29, 2021, ABC News

The first Afghans who worked for the U.S. military and diplomatic missions and are being evacuated will arrive in the U.S. late Thursday night or early Friday morning, according to a source familiar with the plans.

[China interest in Afghanistan could be 'positive', says Blinken](#)

July 29, 2021, BBC

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said China's possible involvement in Afghanistan could be "a positive thing". He said this was if China was looking towards a "peaceful resolution of the conflict" and a "truly representative and inclusive" government.

[Congress approves a \\$2.1 billion emergency spending bill for Capitol security and aid for Afghan refugees](#)

July 29, 2021, The New York Times

Congress on Thursday overwhelmingly approved a \$2.1 billion emergency spending bill to pay for Capitol security costs stemming from the Jan. 6 attack and a push by the Biden administration to allow thousands of Afghans facing retribution for aiding American troops to be quickly evacuated to the United States.

[Blinken says US supports WHO probe into COVID origins](#)

July 29, 2021, The New York Post

Secretary of State Antony Blinken told the head of the World Health Organization that the US supports further examination of the origins of the coronavirus pandemic in China, according to a statement from the State Department.

[US Defense Chief: US Seeks Stable Relations with China](#)

July 27, 2021, Voice of America

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin addressed deterring Chinese aggression in Southeast Asia Tuesday through his "integrated deterrence" approach, declaring the U.S. seeks a stable relationship with China while working to resolve common challenges. "We will not flinch when our interests are threatened. Yet we do not seek confrontation," Austin said in a speech in Singapore.

[US defense secretary broadens cooperation with Vietnam](#)

July 29, 2021, Associated Press

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin met his Vietnamese counterpart on Thursday to deepen cooperation in security and pandemic recovery, after Washington vowed support for Southeast Asian nations embroiled in territorial rifts with China.

[Biden's defense chief meets with Duterte](#)

July 30, 2021, Rappler

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte got his first visit from a Cabinet member of the United States' Biden administration on Thursday, July 29. He received Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin III in Malacañang where they had an "open and frank discussion" on Philippines-US ties.

[Blinken says Tunisian president promised 'democratic path'](#)

July 29, 2021, Al Jazeera

The US Secretary of State has expressed concern about the political crisis in Tunisia after President Kais Saied suspended the parliament and dismissed the government in a move the country's main political parties called a "coup".

[US and Russia hold 'substantive' strategic stability talks as Moscow raps Biden for comments](#)

July 28, 2021, CNN

US and Russian officials had "professional and substantive talks" on strategic stability in Switzerland, the State Department said in a statement Wednesday.

['Industrial Policy' Is Back: The West Dusts Off Old Idea to Counter China](#)

July 29, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

The U.S. and its allies have long pressed China to stop helping favored industries with subsidies, government preferences and other interventions. Now they are beginning to copy it. Last month, the U.S. Senate voted for direct industry subsidies with little precedent: \$52 billion for new semiconductor fabrication plants, called "fabs." Advocates say the U.S. has employed industrial policy in some form ever since its first treasury secretary, Alexander Hamilton, used tariffs to nurture manufacturing. Critics call it "picking winners" in ways better left to capital markets, and point to money wasted on past efforts such as supersonic airliners and fast breeder nuclear reactors.

[Covid Is the 21st Century's Sputnik](#)

July 27, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

On Friday, Oct. 4, 1957, those beeps from the first artificial satellite—Sputnik 1—signaled that the Soviet Union had beaten the U.S. to space. The current battle against Covid—our new wake-up call—should mirror the response to Sputnik. Just as the U.S. could have created NASA and Darpa well before 1957 if our leaders had better understood the global challenge, the worst of Covid-19 could have been prevented if the country had prepared earlier.

Europe & Russia

[How Europe, after a Fumbling Start, Overtook the U.S. in Vaccination](#)

July 29, 2021, The New York Times

The U.S. effort to vaccinate its population peaked in April and then nose-dived, while the E.U. campaign, so recently a target of ridicule, grew faster than those in any other region of the world.

[EU mulls review of China policy, again](#)

July 29, 2021, Politico

The European Union's executive and diplomatic arms are preparing a report reviewing its relationship with China, according to the bloc's foreign policy chief. This will be the second time this year that the European Commission and Borrell carry out such an exercise, after concluding in April that there's no need to update the EU's China strategy, adopted in 2019.

[China hits back after EU official joins call for cooperation on pandemic origins probe](#)

July 28, 2021, Politico

In a veiled warning to Brussels, Chinese officials urged Wednesday an end to "politicizing the issue of origins tracing" amid growing pressure on Beijing to allow for a more thorough investigation into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic.

[EU and Cuba clash over condemnation of protest crackdown](#)

July 29, 2021, Politico

EU-Cuba relations dramatically soured after Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla blasted an EU statement and accused the bloc's foreign policy chief of lying about protests in the country.

[EU creates checklist for 'climate proof' infrastructure projects](#)

July 29, 2021, Reuters

The European Commission on Thursday published a guide to assess whether planned infrastructure projects are equipped to cope with climate change impacts like floods and heatwaves, a condition that must be met to receive certain EU funds.

[UK rejects EU's Northern Ireland 'solutions'](#)

July 26, 2021, Politico

The U.K. on Monday rejected the European Commission's proposals for "solutions" to ease trade friction between Northern Ireland and mainland

Britain, which Brussels set out in two so-called non-papers published earlier the same day.

[France, UK sign new security deal to protect against Channel terror threat](#)

July 26, 2021, France 24

Britain and France on Tuesday signed a new security deal aimed at protecting the public in the event of a terror attack in the Channel against a large vessel such as a passenger ferry, the British government said.

[Russia touts Britain, France for wider nuclear talks](#)

July 29, 2021, Reuters

Russia said on Thursday that it wanted Britain and France to be included in wider nuclear arms control talks with the United States, while it said that Washington wanted China to be included.

Russia

[Russia Bars Leading Communist Politician From Upcoming Elections](#)

July 24, 2021, RFE/RL

Russian electoral authorities have disqualified a top Communist Party candidate from running in September's parliamentary elections, the latest opposition figure to be barred ahead of the vote. The Central Election Commission said on July 24 that Pavel Grudinin was excluded from the party list because the Prosecutor-General's Office had found he held foreign assets.

[Russian warships & nuclear submarines on show in St. Petersburg parade as Putin hails country as world-leading naval power](#)

July 25, 2021, Russia Today

The newest additions to Russia's naval forces have been showcased during the annual Navy Day parade in Saint Petersburg. President Vladimir Putin kicked off the event on July 25 by praising the fleet's long history and hailing Russia as "one the world's leading naval powers." More than 50 warships, ranging from large attack vessels to smaller patrol boats, sailed down the Neva River and the Gulf of Finland as naval aircraft buzzed in the air.

[Russia Eyes Free-Trade Zone on Islands Disputed by Japan](#)

July 26, 2021, The Moscow Times

Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin on July 26 visited the disputed Kuril Islands and said authorities wanted to establish a free economic zone there, sparking a protest from Japan. The Kurils, which lie north of Japan's Hokkaido

Island, have been controlled by Moscow since they were seized by Soviet troops in the dying days of World War II.

[Russian Health Ministry Greenlights Joint Trials of AstraZeneca, Sputnik Light Vaccines](#)

July 27, 2021, Sputnik News

The Russian Health Ministry approved joint trials of coronavirus vaccines AstraZeneca and Sputnik Light, according to its registry of clinical trials approvals. The study will involve 150 patients and is scheduled to be completed on 2 March 2022.

[U.S., Russia Kick Off 'Substantive, Professional' Nuclear Talks In Geneva](#)

July 28, 2021, RFE/RL

The U.S. State Department said after the U.S.-Russian talks in Geneva on strategic nuclear stability that the July 28 meeting was "substantive and professional" and the two sides agreed to hold a further plenary round of high-level talks in late September.

[Russia to Boost Tajikistan Army Amid Afghanistan 'Deterioration'](#)

July 28, 2021, The Moscow Times

Russia will bolster Central Asian ally Tajikistan's military with weapons, equipment and training amid a "deteriorating" situation in neighboring Afghanistan, Moscow's defense minister said on July 28 on a visit to the country. Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will hold joint military drills next week near Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan, where the Taliban has made huge military gains and claims to control 90% of the country's borders.

[Chief Editor Of Investigative News Group Flees Russia](#)

July 30, 2021, RFE/RL

The chief editor of The Project investigative news outlet has left Russia with no plans to return and is trying to evacuate his staff after the group was declared an "undesirable" organization by the Prosecutor-General's Office in Moscow. Roman Badanin said that he had no plans to return to Russia in the foreseeable future because he may face criminal prosecution and imprisonment for up to six years under the country's controversial 2015 law on "undesirable organizations."

[Cosmonauts Scramble to Right Tilted Space Station After New Russian Module Nauka Takes ISS for a Spin](#)

July 30, 2021, Russia Today

The International Space Station is in stable orbit again, after the crew and ground control scrambled to neutralize the spin caused by thrusters on the newly docked Russian 'Nauka' module firing unexpectedly. Roscosmos announced the docking of 'Nauka' on Thursday, the first new Russian component of the ISS in over a decade, which replaced the 20-year-old 'Pirs.'

Africa & Latin America

Latin America

[Equatorial Guinea will shut down embassy in London to protest corruption charges](#)

July 27, 2021, MercoPress

The former Spanish colony of Equatorial Guinea announced it was shutting down its embassy in London following sanctions imposed by the UK on the son of the president alleging corruption. Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, 53, is also the vice-president of Equatorial Guinea and is responsible for the country's defense and security.

[Brazil plans to start vaccinating youngsters aged 12 to 17 and reducing spell between Pfizer doses soon](#)

July 28, 2021, MercoPress

Brazil's health authorities announced vaccination of teenagers aged 12 to 17 years against Covid-19 will commence after the entire population aged 18 years and over has received at least one dose.

[Julian Assange's Ecuadorian nationality revoked by a court](#)

July 28, 2021, MercoPress

An administrative court in Ecuador revoked the country's nationality of Wikileaks founder, Australian-born Julian Assange. The 26 July ruling was notified to Assange's attorney Carlos Poveda and the Ecuadorean foreign ministry. The Ecuadorean foreign ministry started the demand because of reiterated administrative failures in complying with the citizenship procedure at the end of 2017, during the presidency of Conservative Lenin Moreno and foreign minister Maria Fernanda Espinosa.

[Latina America forecasted to grow 5,8% in 2021, IMF Outlook](#)

July 28, 2021, MercoPress

The International Monetary Fund lifted previous 2021 growth forecasts for Latin America and the Caribbean to 5,8%, a significant advance over the last estimate from April, boosted particularly because of the good performances of the Brazilian and Mexican economies.

[Presidents of Argentina, Colombia hold side talk while attending presidential inauguration in Lima](#)

July 29, 2021, MercoPress

Colombia President Iván Duque Márquez praised the current state of bilateral relations with Argentina in a meeting he held with his counterpart from that country, Alberto Fernández, as both leaders were in the Peruvian capital for the inauguration of Pedro Castillo. Meanwhile Fernández invited Duque over to visit Argentina at the earliest time possible, as both leaders held a side talk at the residence of Colombia's ambassador to Lima.

[Pedro Castillo sworn in as Peru's new president](#)

July 29, 2021, MercoPress

Pedro Castillo Terrones has been sworn in as Peru's new President for the 2021-2026 term just barely a week after being declared the winner of the June 6 runoff against conservative candidate Keiko Fujimori.

Africa

[South Africa rejects decision on Israel's AU observer status](#)

July 29, 2021, Africa Times

South Africa voiced its objection to Israel's new status as an observer at the African Union, issuing a statement that said it was "appalled" by a decision described as "unjust and unwarranted." The statement from the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) follows last week's decision by the AU to grant the long-sought official observer designation to Israel.

[Kenyans sue British Army over wildfire damage near training site](#)

July 27, 2021, Africa Times

Some 1,000 Kenyans are suing the British military, after a wildfire back on March 24 destroyed part of a wildlife conservation area and affected people in the surrounding communities. Lawyers for the Kenyans say the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK) started the fire while conducting military training exercises. The BATUK unit is based at Nanyuki, not far from the Loldaiga sanctuary and Laikipia.

[G20 environment ministers fail to agree on coal phaseout](#)

July 26, 2021, Africa Times

South Africa and the other members of the G20 Environment Ministers issued a final communiqué following their meeting in Italy, but they've failed to come to terms on a global coal phaseout. The meeting, which in some respects

signals what to expect ahead of the COP26 climate meeting in Scotland in November, ended with China and India holding off on a commitment to end coal use by 2025. South Africa also relies heavily on coal, with a separate industry report just issued to appeal for a freeze on all new coal plants.

[Africa's satellite market is now open; 20 projects ready to take off](#)

July 26, 2021, The African Report

Despite a gap in 2020, the continent wants to take part in conquering space. Since the beginning of the year, three satellites have been launched and some 20 projects are about to get underway

[Cloud technology in Africa: who is doing what, where? Teraco, Raxio, Rack Centre...](#)

July 26, 2021, The African Report

As bandwidth doubles in just a few years on the continent, companies and governments are increasingly able to rely on cloud computing to cut costs. A new wave of investment - originally centred on South Africa and now spreading across the continent - is seeing domestic African players compete with global heavyweights.

[Nigeria faces deadly Covid-19 Delta wave as infections jump 150%](#)

July 26, 2021, The African Report

After weeks of steady decline in the number of confirmed Covid-19 cases, Nigeria is now responding to what authorities are describing as a "likely third wave" of the pandemic, led by the more contagious Delta variant.

[Pegasus/Morocco affair: Did UNESCO fund the investigation?](#)

July 29, 2021, The African Report

The Moroccan ministry of foreign affairs is convinced that Unesco's division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development, headed by South Africa's Guy Berger, contributed financially to the Forbidden Stories investigation, which directly implicates the Moroccan security services and its use of Pegasus spyware (a claim that Rabat denies).

[As Africa awaits next Covid19 vaccine supplies, WHO survey shows cold chain gaps persist](#)

July 29, 2021, The African Report

Amid a third wave of the pandemic in Africa, only 1.3% of the population have so far been fully vaccinated against Covid-19, with 1.35 billion people still at risk of contracting the virus.



DPG

Delhi Policy Group
Core 5A, 1st Floor,
India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road
New Delhi - 110003
India
www.delhipolicygroup.org