



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



Volume V, Issue 33 | August 14, 2021

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 33

### ABOUT US

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

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

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

### DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

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## South Asia

### India

#### [India, Saudi Arabia begin maiden bilateral naval exercise in port Al-Jubail](#)

August 12, 2021, India Today

The maiden bilateral naval exercise between India and Saudi Arabia, dubbed "Al-Mohed Al-Hindi," began on Thursday in Al-Jubail, Saudi Arabia. The exercise comprises several shore and sea-based drills between the navies of the two countries.

#### [UNSC adopts first-ever statement on maritime security under India's presidency](#)

August 9, 2021, Hindustan Times

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on Monday adopted the first-ever presidential statement on maritime security soon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a virtual open debate focused on global cooperation for maritime security. India, as the UNSC president this month, noted the threats to maritime safety and security and called upon the members to consider implementing the 2000 UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

#### [Modi government's politics with China is evolving. Gogra disengagement is proof](#)

August 12, 2021, The Print

The Modi government has adopted the correct strategy – swallow the bitter pill of buffer zones and bide our time to challenge China when we are ready.

#### [Idea of self-reliant India strongest in last 75 years: Rajnath Singh](#)

August 14, 2021, The Indian Express

Launching a number of events to mark 75 years of Independence, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said that if challenged, India is prepared to give a befitting reply to anyone. He mentioned that for a country's unity and integrity, national self-esteem is important.

#### [India stepped out to help needy around the world during pandemic: EAM Jaishankar](#)

August 12, 2021, Deccan Herald

External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar virtually addressed the CII Annual Session 2021 on August 12. While addressing the event, EAM Jaishankar said

that amid Covid pandemic, India stepped out with medical and food supplies going for those in need.

### [Won't recognise any Afghan government imposed by force: India, others at Doha Meet](#)

August 14, 2021, The Times of India

After a regional conference in Doha, India joined Qatar and several other countries in declaring that there will be no recognition of any military takeover of Afghanistan and in calling for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire.

## **Pakistan**

### [Pakistan, Iraq to form mechanism for political consultations](#)

August 12, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan and Iraq agreed on setting up a mechanism for political consultations between the two countries and early convening of a body that steers bilateral cooperation. This was agreed during Iraqi Foreign Minister Dr Fuad Hussein's two-day visit to Pakistan.

### [US finds Pakistan useful only to clear mess in Afghanistan: PM Imran](#)

August 12, 2021, Dawn

Prime Minister Imran Khan accused the United States of seeing Pakistan as useful only in the context of the "mess" it is leaving behind in Afghanistan after 20 years of fighting.

### [PM wants Pakistan to become hub for Muslim tourists](#)

August 11, 2021, Dawn

Prime Minister Imran Khan said that Pakistan had the potential to become a centre of tourism, especially for the Muslim world, by exploiting the growing "Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiments" in the West as Muslim tourists no longer feel safe to visit those places with their families and Pakistan, with its scenic beaches, could become the best alternative for millions of visitors every year.

### [US wants to continue improving ties, Austin tells Bajwa](#)

August 11, 2021, Dawn

In a phone call to Army Chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin has conveyed Washington's interest in continuing to improve the US-Pakistan relationship, the Pentagon said.

### [Pakistan a democracy only in name: Hamid Mir](#)

August 10, 2021, Dawn

The anchor and host of the now-off air primetime show Capital Talk on Geo, Hamid Mir, in a wide-ranging interview to the BBC World Service, criticised the shrinking space for press freedom and the growing "climate of fear" for journalists in Pakistan.

### [China to provide 100m vaccine doses, envoy tells president](#)

August 10, 2021, Dawn

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong, during a meeting with the president, informed Dr Alvi that China would provide six million doses of vaccine this week, while 100m more doses would be provided by the end of the year.

### [Two journalists briefly detained for 'defaming' army, judiciary](#)

August 8, 2021, Dawn

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) cybercrime wing briefly held two journalists for uploading content on their YouTube channels allegedly "against the army, judiciary and women". The FIA cybercrime wing Lahore spokesman said: "Suspects Amir Mir and Imran Shafqat were arrested.

### [Imran pushing for use of EVMs in next polls](#)

August 8, 2021, The News

Without any meaningful effort to hammer out an agreement with the opposition, Prime Minister Imran Khan is pushing for the introduction of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in the next general elections.

### [Pakistan on Red List for failing to give Covid-19 data, UK claims](#)

August 9, 2021, The News

The British government has claimed that the Pakistan authorities didn't share with them the COVID-19 data on vaccination and testing and that likely explains why Pakistan remains on the travel ban Red List – while India and several other countries have been moved out of the ban list into the Amber category.

### [WB asks Pakistan to speed up power sector reforms](#)

August 9, 2021, The News

The World Bank (WB) has asked Pakistan to accelerate the pace of power sector reforms in order to achieve a higher economic growth and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### [Terrorist havens at Pak-Afghan border source of instability: Pentagon](#)

August 10, 2021, The News

The Pentagon blamed Pakistan for the volatile Afghan situation by saying terrorist safe havens at the Pak-Afghan border were the sources of instability and insecurity.

### [Dasu Hydropower project: Talks on resumption work remain inconclusive](#)

August 12, 2021, The News

The talks between the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and Gezhouba Group Company remained inconclusive on the resumption of the work on 4320 megawatts Dasu Hydropower project. The work on the mega World Bank-funded energy project was stopped after the death of 13 people, including nine Chinese nationals, in an explosion in a bus. The bus was carrying workers to an under- construction tunnel of the dam on July 13.

### [Pakistani forces clash with Afghan protesters at border crossing shut by Taliban](#)

August 12, 2021, The Express Tribune

Security forces clashed with hundreds of Afghans stranded on Pakistan's side of a commercially vital border crossing with Afghanistan after its closure by Taliban insurgents, Pakistani security officials said. The disturbances broke out after a 56-year-old Afghan traveller died of a heart attack as he waited in the dusty heat to enter Afghanistan via the Chaman-Spin Boldak crossing.

### [Pakistan conducts training launch of surface-to-surface Ghaznavi missile](#)

August 12, 2021, The Express Tribune

Pakistan conducted a training launch of surface-to-surface ballistic missile Ghaznavi. The missile spanned a range of 900 kilometers and the test flight was aimed at the re-validating of various design and technical parameters of the weapon system including an advanced navigation system.

## **Afghanistan**

### [Afghan commander Ismail Khan captured as Taliban seize Herat](#)

August 13, 2021, Reuters

Taliban insurgents have seized most of Herat, Afghanistan's third largest city, and also captured Ismail Khan, the veteran local commander leading militia resistance there. The fall of Herat, the latest in a series of major provincial cities to be taken by the Taliban in the past few days, has dealt a shocking blow to the government of President Ashraf Ghani only weeks after the withdrawal of U.S. forces.

### [Doha Meeting Agrees on Need to Accelerate Afghan Peace Process](#)

August 13, 2021, Tolo News

Participants at an international meeting on Afghanistan in Doha agreed on the need to accelerate the Afghan peace process and call for an immediate end to the ongoing violence in the country, said Abdullah Abdullah, head of the High Council for National Reconciliation, who also attended the meeting.

### [U.S. mobilizes 3,000 troops to Kabul for embassy staff drawdown](#)

August 13, 2021, Reuters

Faced with unexpectedly rapid military gains by the Taliban, the United States decided to dramatically scale down its embassy in Kabul and send about 3,000 troops temporarily to aid the evacuation of staff.

### [Ghani, Political Leaders Agree on Public Forces Command Center](#)

August 9, 2021, Tolo News

A group of political leaders and President Ashraf Ghani at a meeting agreed to form a joint command center for public uprising forces to better manage, equip and strengthen them in the fight against the Taliban.

## **Bangladesh**

### [Bangladesh begins COVID vaccination drive for Rohingya refugees](#)

August 10, 2021, Al Jazeera

The government of Bangladesh and aid agencies have started vaccinating Rohingya refugees against coronavirus as a surge in cases raises health concerns in the sprawling, cramped camps where more than one million people who fled Myanmar are sheltering.

### [Bangladesh seeks Covid jabs from Canada](#)

August 12, 2021, Dhaka Tribune

Dhaka has urged Canada to consider providing Covid-19 jabs to Bangladesh directly as well as through the Covax initiative to help the country inoculate the Rohingya refugees and host communities.



## **Nepal**

### [China cannot take India's place as a special neighbour: Nepali Congress a month after coming to power](#)

August 13, 2021, The Times of India

As the ruling Nepali Congress completed a month of its governance on Friday, the party said that China cannot take India's place as a "special" neighbour, and asserted its decision to solve the Limpiyadhura-Kalapani-Lipulekh region issue through diplomatic means.

### [China and Nepal trustworthy friends; No change in one-China policy. Nepal's relations with neighbors: Nepalese Ambassador](#)

August 12, 2021, Global Times

There won't be any change in Nepal's one-China policy and there will not be any change in relations with neighbors and friendly countries, Nepalese Ambassador to China Mahendra Bahadur Pandey told the Global Times in a recent exclusive interview following the country's latest change of Premiership.

## **Sri Lanka**

### [Sri Lanka navy personnel pelt stones on Indian fishermen, damage nets](#)

August 12, 2021, The New Indian Express

An Indian fisherman was injured when Sri Lankan Naval personnel allegedly hurled stones at a group of fishermen fishing near Katchatheevu, an official said.

### [Sri Lanka's new road map on India stresses on trade, defence and religious exchanges](#)

August 12, 2021, WION

The Sri Lankan high commission in India has come out with a 27 page "integrated country strategy" or a road map that aims to strengthen ties with India on several areas like trade, defense, connectivity, and people to people with a mandate of two years.

### [Drugs, ammo in Sri Lankan boat: LTTE, Pakistan links identified](#)

August 14, 2021, The New Indian Express

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) probing the seizure of five AK-47 rifles and `3,000-crore worth of heroin from a Sri Lanka boat off the Kerala coast on March 25 has found that a Pakistan national was the main handler of the smugglers.

## East & South East Asia

### China

[China rejects WHO's next-phase origins study based on non-scientific evidence, calls on US to 'open its door'](#)

August 13, 2021, Global Times

China rejects the WHO's next-phase origins-tracing work proposal as it is not based on the scientific evidence gathered from the first-phase study jointly conducted by Chinese and foreign experts in Wuhan, Central China's Hubei Province earlier this year. The proposal was also made without full consultation with member states, a senior Chinese diplomat said.

[Excluding New Delhi from 'Troika Plus' shows India's minor role in Afghan issue](#)

August 13, 2021, Global Times

Meetings on Afghan negotiations of the Troika Plus - China, Russia, Pakistan, and the US - kicked off in Doha, Qatar on Wednesday. However, India was not invited to the Russian-led talks. This has sparked discussions in New Delhi. Some Indian media believe that the exclusion of India from the extended Troika meeting proves that India's position on the Afghan issue is not completely on par with Russia's.

[Upgrading Quad and Malabar exercise shows US anxiety about China](#)

August 11, 2021, Global Times

The four Quad countries - India, the US, Japan, and Australia - will conduct the Malabar 2021 exercises off Guam in the Western Pacific later this month. The Malabar exercise started in 1992 as a bilateral military exercise between the Indian Navy and the US Navy in the Indian Ocean. Japan has been participating in this drill annually since 2015. In 2020, India invited Australia to take part in the annual exercise, making it a drill among the Quad navies.

[China, Russia can cooperate to punish Lithuania](#)

August 11, 2021, Global Times

After China announced the recall of its ambassador to Lithuania and demanded the country withdraw its top envoy from China, US Department of State spokesperson Ned Price condemned China's "retaliatory actions" at Tuesday's press briefing. He said, "We stand in solidarity with our NATO ally Lithuania... Each country should be able to determine the contours of its own 'one China' policy without outside coercion."

### [Biden govt wants to 'weaponize' democracy](#)

August 13, 2021, Global Times

The "Summit for Democracy" to be convened by the US serves only its goal of lulling certain countries together to challenge China, creating deeper confrontation between different ideological camps, which shows Washington's tendency to "weaponize democracy, and insult the word 'democracy,'" analysts believed.

### [China-Russia joint strategic drills send strong signal](#)

August 12, 2021, Global Times

The exercise ZAPAD/INTERACTION-2021 is underway at the Qingtongxia Combined Arms Tactical Training Base in Northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. This is the first time that the Russian army or even a foreign army is invited by China to participate in the PLA's strategic exercise in China. The exercise ZAPAD/INTERACTION-2021 is underway at the Qingtongxia Combined Arms Tactical Training Base in Northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. This is the first time that the Russian army or even a foreign army is invited by China to participate in the PLA's strategic exercise in China.

### [China widely engages in deep-sea research](#)

August 13, 2021, China Daily

On June 25, Shenhai Yihao, the world's first 100,000 ton deep-sea, semi-submersible oil production and storage platform, began drilling at Lingshui 17-2, an offshore gas field located 150 kilometers south of Hainan island in the South China Sea.

### [Security law has pulled HK out of nosedive](#)

August 13, 2021, China Daily

By October 2019, when the insurrection was at its peak in Hong Kong, most of the city's universities were either barely functioning or completely closed down. At the University of Hong Kong, the fevered, extremist wing of the insurgency essentially took over the Pokfulam Road campus, shutting down all teaching and academic life whilst going on a destructive rampage that still beggars belief.

### [U.S. Steps Up Pressure on Businesses Over Forced Labor in China](#)

August 9, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

U.S. lawmakers and Biden administration officials are stepping up pressure on American businesses to stop imports from the Western Chinese region of Xinjiang as Beijing's alleged use of forced labor emerges as a top item on their

bilateral trade agenda. Western officials say the Chinese government uses forced labor of Uyghur and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, the world's leading producer of cotton and raw materials used in solar panels. Beijing strongly denies the claim.

### [China unveils five-year plan to strengthen control of economy](#)

August 12, 2021, The Financial Times

China has released a five-year plan to strengthen regulatory control over strategic sectors including technology and healthcare, in Beijing's latest push to assert Communist party supremacy over the world's second-largest economy. The party's Central Committee and the State Council, or cabinet, jointly released a policy document late on Wednesday that would expand government legislation and build a modern regulatory environment to "meet people's ever-growing demands for a good life."

### [China's new U.S. envoy stresses importance of Taiwan in first high-level meeting](#)

August 13, 2021, Reuters

China's newly appointed ambassador in Washington stressed the utmost importance of Taiwan in the Sino-U.S. relationship during his first meeting with a top U.S. official since assuming the job, according to Chinese state media. Qin Gang, 55, who has earned a reputation for pointed public defences of his country's positions, struck an optimistic tone as he arrived in Washington in late July to take up his post, saying great potential awaited bilateral relations. read more.

### [China's future economic potential hinges on its productivity](#)

August 14, 2021, The Economist

In 2010 China was home to fewer than 50,000 industrial robots. Today it has 800,000—nearly one in three of the robots in the world. This is in part because robots are cheaper than they used to be, and more capable. But it is also because, as China has grown wealthier and older, wages have increased a lot.

## **Japan**

### [New Quad talks strengthen ties among US, Japan, India and Australia](#)

August 13, 2021, South China Morning Post

Senior diplomats from the US, Japan, India and Australia held another round of talks on Thursday, the latest sign that the burgeoning alliance known as the Quad continues to grow closer in the face of an increasingly assertive Beijing.

### [Japan's Military Role in the Indo-Pacific](#)

August 12, 2021, The Diplomat

Conversation with Robert Ward, Japan chair and director of Geo-economics and Strategy at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, is the 282nd in "The Trans-Pacific View Insight Series."

### [Japan's New China Reality](#)

August 13, 2021, Wall Street Journal

The drumbeat of concern from America's most important Asian ally about China's military rise is getting louder. Last month Japan's Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso warned that a Chinese invasion of Taiwan could threaten Japan's "survival." Now Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi has bluntly acknowledged America's relative decline in the Western Pacific and the need for Japan to assert itself militarily to fill the void.

### [China is angry after Japanese defense minister's visit to Yasukuni Shrine](#)

August 13, 2021, CGTN

A spokesperson from China's Ministry of National Defense on Friday urged Japan to earnestly reflect upon its history of aggression and take practical steps to win trust from neighboring countries.

### [Japan's defence, economy ministers visit Yasukuni shrine](#)

August 13, 2021, Al Jazeera

Two senior ministers in the cabinet of Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga visited a controversial shrine in Tokyo honouring the country's war dead on Friday, according to news reports, in a move that could increase tension with China, and South and North Korea.

### [Can Japan Really Trust America?](#)

August 12, 2021, Nikkei Asia

Japan, America's most pivotal ally in Asia, faces pressing security challenges due to Chinese President Xi Jinping's expansionist policies, which appear to be driven by an increasing appetite for taking risks. After accelerating a provocative campaign of aerial and maritime incursions designed to challenge Japanese control of the Senkaku Islands which Beijing claims and calls the Diaoyu, Xi has also set his sights on absorbing Taiwan, which, geographically, is an extension of the Japanese archipelago.

## Korea

### ['North Korea likely to ditch inter-Korean military agreement'](#)

August 11, 2021, The Korea Times

A series of threats by North Korea regarding combined military exercises run by South Korea and the United States could lead to Pyongyang scrapping an inter-Korean military pact and demolishing South Korean facilities at the Mount Geumgang tourist resort, as a means to extract more concessions from Washington, according to diplomatic observers here.

### [NK warns of 'serious security crisis,' upping threats against Seoul, Washington](#)

August 11, 2021, The Korea Herald

North Korea stepped up threats against Seoul and Washington, saying that it will give the allies "a serious security crisis" for hosting joint military drills.

### [Korea outpaces Japan](#)

August 13, 2021, The Korea Times

Korea has outpaced Japan in many economic indicators, though the neighboring country has so far been regarded here as an "insurmountable wall." Yet, Seoul still lags behind Tokyo in terms of technological competitiveness, according to the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI), Thursday. The FKI came up with these and other facts in its report titled "Changes in rankings of economic competitiveness between Korea and Japan since 1990."

### [North Korean media urges South Korea, US to stop joint military drills, withdraw American troops](#)

August 14, 2021, The Korea Times

A North Korean propaganda outlet on Saturday urged South Korea and the United States to stop their joint military exercise and pull American troops out of the South if the South wants peace on the peninsula.

### [A bilateral free trade deal between two Koreas](#)

August 14, 2021, The Korea Times

An incremental Bilateral Free Trade Agreement (BFTA) between South Korea and North Korea, initially for trade in agricultural products, but then extending step-by-step to other sectors over a period of 10 years. The goal would be to further intra-Korean cooperation and relieve humanitarian hardship in North Korea without the need for aid.

## Southeast Asia

### [ASEAN, India should explore ways to enhance digital connectivity: Singapore's Deputy PM](#)

August 11, 2021, The Hindu

India and the 10-nation bloc ASEAN should explore ways to enhance the digital connectivity to further enhance economic cooperation between the two regions, Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for Economic Policies Heng Swee Keat said.

### [Myanmar objects to BRO presence in trilateral KMTT road project](#)

August 13, 2021, The Economic Times

Myanmar has conveyed its apprehension over the deployment of the Border Road Organisation (BRO) for the completion of the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway and Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport (KMTT) project, the Union government informed the parliamentary committee on home affairs. The military in Myanmar seized control in February this year, forcing thousands of Myanmarese nationals to seek shelter in India.

### [China Starts Calling Myanmar Junta "Government"](#)

August 11, 2021, The Irrawady

China has started calling the Myanmar junta the "government" and pledged US\$6 million to fund 21 development projects in the country. A statement from the junta's foreign ministry said that the funds were to be transferred from China for projects within the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation framework.

### [Singapore deputy PM for greater economic integration between India and ASEAN](#)

August 11, 2021, Hindustan Times

India should consider greater economic integration with Southeast Asia, including through the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), to unlock the country's full potential, Singapore's deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat said.

### [Regardless of season or size, Singapore-India ties remain robust at 56](#)

August 9, 2021, Hindustan Times

August is a special month for Singapore. We celebrate two important occasions on August 8 and 9 – the establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967, and the independence of modern Singapore in 1965, respectively.

## Central & West Asia

### Central Asia

#### [Afghanistan, Coronavirus Lend Extra Weight To Central Asian Leaders' Summit](#)

August 09, 2021, RFE/RL

All five Central Asian heads of state gathered at a resort on Turkmenistan's Caspian coast on August 6. While there was something familiar about their talk of cooperation, new realities lent greater urgency to the discussions.

#### [Kazakhstan suffers from acute shortage of doctors](#)

August 09, 2021, Eurasianet

One of the uncomfortable facts laid bare by Kazakhstan's COVID-19 outbreak is how few people are willing to work in the healthcare sector – the result of depressed salaries.

#### [Kyrgyz President Urged To Reject Controversial 'False Information' Bill](#)

August 11, 2021, RFE/RL

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) is calling on Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov to reject a “false information” bill recently approved by lawmakers, saying that the proposed legislation “imperils” press freedom in the Central Asian nation.

#### [Russia Wraps Up Drills With Uzbek And Tajik Troops Near Afghan Border](#)

August 11, 2021, RFE/RL

Russia completed joint military exercises with troops from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on August 10 as the Taliban gained control of much of northern Afghanistan bordering Moscow's Central Asian allies. The war games began last week, involving about 2,500 troops at a training ground in Tajikistan about 20 kilometers from the Afghan border.

#### [A COVID-19 Loan for COVID-Denying Turkmenistan](#)

August 12, 2021, The Diplomat

In July, the World Bank signed a \$20 million loan for Turkmenistan, to address the health and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Turkmenistan, however, the virus has not arrived. Or at least, that's what the government claims.



## [Turkmen, Uzbek, Russian Officials Hold Talks With Taliban Amid Deteriorating Afghan Security](#)

August 12, 2021, RFE/RL

The Taliban says representatives of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Russia have held talks with the chief of the group's political office in Qatar amid growing regional concerns over the insurgents' ongoing military offensive across Afghanistan.

## **West Asia**

### [Hard-liner Raisi Becomes Iran's President, Seeks End to Sanctions](#)

August 05, 2021, Kyodo News

Ebrahim Raisi took office as Iran's President vowing to pursue a "fully peaceful" nuclear program and calling for international sanctions to be lifted. Raisi said in his speech after being sworn-in that the policies of sanctions and pressure against Iran have not succeeded, and that his government would support diplomatic initiatives to end them.

### [Indian Air Force to Revive 'Project Cheetah', Heron Drones to Be Upgraded with Israel's Help](#)

August 03, 2021, DNA

The Indian Air Force's (IAF) long-pending nearly Rs 5,000 crore 'Project Cheetah' is finally set to take off. Under this project, India's Heron drones are to be upgraded and armed with Israel's help to carry out offensive operations against the enemy. 90 Heron drones of the three services - Indian Air Force (IAF), Indian Army, and the Indian Navy will be upgraded with laser-guided bombs, air to ground, and air-launched anti-tank guided missiles.

### [India Rejects OIC Statement on Kashmir, Asks it to Bar 'Vested Interests' from Using Platform](#)

August 05, 2021, Hindustan Times

India rejected the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) call to revoke the changes made to the status of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019, saying the grouping shouldn't allow "vested interests" to use its platform to comment on the country's internal affairs.

### [International Community Cannot Afford to Ignore Terrorist Activities in Syria and Region: India](#)

August 05, 2021, The Economic Times

The international community cannot afford to ignore terrorist activities in Syria and the region, India has said as it voiced concern over frequent reports of a resurgence of militant groups in the area and the possibility of them gaining access to chemical weapons.

### [Indian Navy Undertakes Naval Exercise with UAE off Abu Dhabi Coast](#)

August 08, 2021, India Today

The bilateral naval exercise-- 'Zayed Talwar 2021'-- was designed to enhance interoperability and synergy between the two navies. INS Kochi, with two integral Sea King MK 42B helicopters, deployed in the Persian Gulf, participated in the exercise.

### [With Tensions High, Israeli Defence Minister Gantz Says Israel is Ready to Strike Iran](#)

August 05, 2021, AL Jazeera

Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz has said the country's military is ready to take action against Iran, calling it "a global and regional problem". The comments came as tensions continue to rise in the region following a deadly drone strike last week on an Israeli-managed tanker off the coast of Oman.

### [Hezbollah Fires 19 Rockets Toward Israel, In Heaviest Barrage Since 2006 War](#)

August 06, 2021, The Times of Israel

Nineteen rockets were fired at northern Israel from Lebanon, sending residents in a number of towns in the Golan Heights and Galilee Panhandle scrambling to shelters. The Hezbollah terror group later acknowledged responsibility for the barrage, its heaviest since the 2006 Second Lebanon War.

### [Saudi Aramco Follows Big Oil Rivals with Profit Surge](#)

August 08, 2021, The Hindu BusinessLine

Aramco - world's biggest energy company made a net profit of 95.5 billion riyals (\$25.5 billion) in the second quarter, the highest level since the end of 2018. Free cash flow rose to \$22.6 billion, above the state-controlled firm's quarterly dividend of \$18.8 billion for the first time since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

### [G7: Iran Behind Tanker Attack, 'Threatens International Peace'](#)

August 06, 2021, AL Jazeera

G7 foreign ministers have said "all available evidence clearly points to Iran" being behind a drone attack on July 29 against an Israel-linked tanker that killed a former British soldier and Romanian national.

### [Yemen War: Top Houthi Negotiator Says 'no use' in Meeting New UN Envoy Now](#)

August 08, 2021, Middle East Eye

Mohammed Abdulsalam said the movement would not meet with Swedish diplomat Hans Grundberg, who was appointed as the new UN envoy for Yemen, until the sea and air restrictions imposed by the Saudi-led coalition on Houthi-held areas are lifted.

### [Iran Nukes the Case for a Biden Deal](#)

August 10, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

This was the week that the optimistic case for restoring the 2015 Iran nuclear deal died. Like so many other innocents, it died at the hands of Ebrahim Raisi, the hanging judge handpicked by Iran's supreme leader to guide the Islamic Republic through the Biden years...All this would open a political window for moderates, who would increasingly soften the regime's harsh policies at home and end its confrontation with neighbors. A nonnuclear Iran would become a stable, democratic force in the Middle East, optimists believed.

## United States

### United States

#### [Biden seeks to shore up world democracy with December summit](#)

August 11, 2021, Reuters

U.S. President Joe Biden is turning to larger efforts aimed at shoring up faith in democracy and convening a summit with other world leaders later this year. Biden will gather heads of state from other democratic nations for a virtual summit on Dec. 9 and 10, the White House said on Wednesday. The summit will also include representatives of "civil society, philanthropy, and the private sector," who will make commitments for a year of action, with a follow-up, in-person session one year later.

#### [Infra and maritime security top agenda at virtual Quad meeting](#)

August 13, 2021, Hindustan Times

Senior officials of the four members of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad on Thursday discussed ways to take forward cooperation in areas such as infrastructure, maritime security and humanitarian aid in order to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

#### [South China Sea: US and China spar over 'biggest threat' in disputed waters](#)

August 10, 2021, South China Morning Post

China has faced "no consequences" for ignoring rules in the South China Sea, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said at the latest UN maritime security summit, as the two powers blamed each other for stirring up tensions in the flashpoint region.

#### [Blinken's Warning on China's Nukes](#)

August 9, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

The Friday readout from Secretary of State Antony Blinken's meeting with leaders of Southeast Asian countries listed some of the long-running U.S. objections to Chinese behavior, then added a new one: "The Secretary also noted deep concern with the rapid growth of the PRC's nuclear arsenal," according to a State Department press release. The buildup "highlights how Beijing has sharply deviated from its decades-old nuclear strategy based on minimum deterrence."

[US defence chief Lloyd Austin has yet to speak with Chinese counterpart, Pentagon says](#)

August 12, 2021, South China Morning Post

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin has yet to speak with his Chinese counterpart, a Pentagon spokesman said, as the two sides wrangle over protocol.

[US, China stress importance of dialogue and communication to resolve issues](#)

August 13, 2021, The Straits Times

In his first official meeting with American officials after a two-week quarantine following his arrival on July 28, Ambassador Qin Gang met with US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman on Thursday afternoon to exchange views on "issues of mutual interest", according to a readout from the Chinese embassy.

[U.S. Is Sending 3,000 Troops Back to Afghanistan to Begin Evacuations](#)

August 12, 2021, The New York Times

The Pentagon is moving 3,000 Marines and soldiers to Afghanistan and another 4,000 troops to the region to evacuate most of the American Embassy and U.S. citizens in Kabul, as the Biden administration braces for a possible collapse of the Afghan government within the next month, administration and military officials said.

[Blinken discusses Afghanistan security situation with Canada, Germany, and NATO](#)

August 13, 2021, Reuters

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with his Canadian and German counterparts and NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg to discuss plans to reduce violence in Afghanistan amid a rapidly evolving security situation, U.S. department of state said in a statement on Thursday.

[U.S. Defence Secretary discusses Afghan situation with Pakistan Army chief](#)

August 10, 2021, The Hindu

U.S. Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, in a phone call with Pakistan Army chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, discussed the current situation in Afghanistan, regional security issues and the bilateral defence ties, the Pentagon said.

[Biden deserves blame for the debacle in Afghanistan](#)

August 13, 2021, CNN

Biden is presiding over a debacle entirely of his own making in Afghanistan -- and one that has unfolded more swiftly than even the direst prognostications.

Since Biden announced a total US withdrawal in April, the Taliban have taken over more than one-third of the 34 provincial capitals in Afghanistan, and they now control more than half of the country's some 400 districts.

### [Senate Passes \\$1.2 Trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill](#)

August 10, 2021, US News

The Senate on Tuesday easily passed the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill, a major bipartisan achievement that temporarily cuts through the intense polarization on Capitol Hill while also bolstering a central tenet of President Joe Biden's economic agenda.

## Europe & Russia

### Europe

#### [EU Threatens Taliban With 'Isolation' if They Seize Power](#)

August 12, 2021, AFP

The European Union on Thursday warned the Taliban that it would face being cut off by the international community if it seized power through violence, as the insurgents sweep across Afghanistan.

#### [European countries halt deportations amid Afghanistan fighting](#)

August 12, 2021, Al Jazeera

France has become the latest European country to announce that it has stopped efforts to deport Afghan refugees as the Taliban continues to make sweeping gains in the war-torn country, amid the withdrawal of foreign troops.

#### [UK to send 600 troops to Kabul to help nationals leave](#)

August 12, 2021, PBS

Britain said Thursday that it will send around 600 troops to Afghanistan to help U.K. nationals leave the country amid growing concerns about the security situation following the rapid advance of the Taliban.

#### [UK economy rebounds as Covid restrictions ease](#)

August 12, 2021, BBC

The UK economy grew by 4.8% between April and June, according to official figures, as most businesses emerged from lockdown. Data from the Office for National Statistics showed that the expansion in gross domestic product (GDP) was fuelled by retail, restaurants and hotels.

#### [Britain-Ireland freight falls 29% amid post-Brexit trade friction](#)

August 12, 2021, Financial Times

Post-Brexit trade frictions have "significantly altered" freight flows between Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland as Irish businesses opt to send goods directly into Europe, according to an official report.

#### [Germany's Greens Get Tougher on Russia, China as They Move Closer to Power](#)

August 11, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

Germany's Green Party wants to overhaul the economic, foreign and climate policies of the continent's largest economy in a political realignment that could have a profound impact on the European Union and potentially harden Germany's stance toward China and Russia.

### [Germany warns Iran not to squander window of opportunity in Vienna talks](#)

August 11, 2021, Reuters

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas on Wednesday urged Iran to return to the Vienna negotiations on reviving a nuclear deal as soon as possible.

### [North Macedonia, Albania Face New Obstacles on Path to EU](#)

August 12, 2021, Voice of America

North Macedonia's bid for membership in the European Union was held up for two decades by a dispute with Greece over its name. One painful compromise later, the road forward is being blocked again — this time by Bulgaria in a dispute over language and historical grievances.

### [Poland's ruling party rams through media law despite US warnings](#)

August 12, 2021, Politico

Poland's ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party on Wednesday pushed through a media reform bill that critics say is aimed at undermining a U.S.-owned TV station that is critical of the right-wing government.

### [Beijing recalls Lithuania ambassador in another shock to EU-China relations](#)

August 10, 2021, Sup China

In response to Lithuania establishing a "Taiwanese representative office," China said it would withdraw its envoy to Vilnius, and demanded the Baltic nation recall its ambassador in Beijing.

## **Russia**

### [China, Russia Showcase Growing Ties With Joint Military Exercises](#)

August 09, 2021, RFE/RL

In the latest display of deepening ties between Beijing and Moscow, Chinese and Russian troops kicked off five days of military exercises in northwestern China on August 9. More than 10,000 troops from the Chinese and Russian militaries are participating in the Zapad/Interaction 2021 drills in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.

### [Russia's new Checkmate jet fighter in high demand on world arms market — Rostec head](#)

August 09, 2021, TASS News Agency

Russia's latest Checkmate fighter unveiled at the MAKS-2021 international airshow is in demand on the world arms market, Head of the state tech corporation Rostec Sergey Chemezov said on August 09.



[Russian, Indian commandos eliminate notional terrorists in Indra-2021 joint drills](#)

August 09, 2021, TASS News Agency

Troops from Russia and India carried out an anti-terror operation during the Indra-2021 international drills at the Prudboi training ground in the Volgograd Region in Russia's south, the press office of Russia's Southern Military District reported. During the drills, the Russian and Indian units drew up a plan of joint operation and eliminated the notional terrorists by joint efforts.

[West using int'l organizations to hamper parliamentary elections in Russia – Lavrov](#)

August 09, 2021, TASS News Agency

Western nations are seeking to use international structures, in particular, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to hinder parliamentary elections in Russia, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said.

[Russian MoD: CSTO Must Be Ready for Possible Infiltration of Terrorists From Afghanistan](#)

August 11, 2021, Sputnik News

The border between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan and Tajikistan is controlled by the Taliban movement, and it is important for Russia that the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) be ready for a possible infiltration of terrorists from Afghanistan, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said.

[U.S., Russian Defense Chiefs Talk By Phone About 'Strategic Stability'](#)

August 11, 2021, RFE/RL

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and his Russian counterpart, Sergei Shoigu, have spoken about ongoing "strategic stability" talks launched last month after a recent presidential summit. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said Austin and Shoigu discussed "transparency and risk-reduction efforts following the resumption of the U.S.-Russia Strategic Stability Dialogue."

[Peaceful Protests 'Become Almost Impossible' In Russia, Report Says](#)

August 12, 2021, RFE/RL

Russian authorities have stifled people's right to peaceful protests to such an extent that it has become almost impossible for Russians to protest in any meaningful way, Amnesty International has said in a report.

[Large oil spill off Russia's southern Black Sea coast prompts criminal investigation](#)

August 12, 2021, Russia Today

Russian authorities have launched a criminal probe after a vast quantity of oil leaked into the Black Sea off Russia's southern coast, covering an area of some 80 square kilometers. The country's Investigative Committee opened a case, saying it would investigate the incident following massive public uproar in Russia.

## Africa & Latin America

### Latin America

#### [Deforestation of Amazonia takes turn for the worse despite Brazilian President's promises](#)

August 9, 2021, MercoPress

Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (Inpe) has released over this past weekend updated data regarding the deforestation of Amazonia between August 2020 and July 2021. According to the most recent figures, a loss of 8,712 square kilometers has been detected, making it the second highest yearly deforestation ever measured by the Determin alert system, which is based on hi-fi resolution satellite data.

#### [Argentine President wants to make internet "a public utility"](#)

August 10, 2021, MercoPress

Argentine President Alberto Fernández vowed to make the internet a public utility that forced telecommunication companies to agree with the national government on when and how much they could increase their rates. Fernández made those remarks during the launching ceremony of the Argentina Program, a government initiative regarding public access to technology.

#### [Argentine Defense Minister wants Almagro to leave OAS](#)

August 11, 2021, MercoPress

Argentina's newly-appointed Defense Minister and former Senator Jorge Taiana had sent a message to US President Joseph Biden stating that Organization of American States (OAS) Secretary-General Luis "Almagro must resign."

#### [Borders are closed but illegal crossing between Paraguay and Argentina is easier than ever](#)

August 12, 2021, MercoPress

While borders between Argentina and Paraguay are technically still closed as a result of emergency sanitary measures due to the coronavirus pandemic, walking across the Parana river bed from one country to another is becoming increasingly common as a result of the historical downspout.

### [South Korea/Mercosur round of trade talks at the end of the month](#)

August 12, 2021, MercoPress

South Korea wants to advance trade negotiations with Mercosur. Discussions started back in 2018 and at the end of the month, a seventh-round is slated to take place. "The trade agreement with Mercosur will pave the way for South Korean exporters to secure the emerging markets of South America and complete our FTA portfolio in the region," the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy said in a statement.

### [Brazil finally revokes the National Security Law from 1983](#)

August 12, 2021, MercoPress

The Brazilian senate passed on Tuesday a bill revoking the National Security Law dating back to 1983 when the country was ruled by military dictators. The new text adds several crimes against democratic institutions and the rule of the law and is expected to be sanctioned by president Jai Bolsonaro. The bill under the military was used to imprison dissidents, members of the opposition and politicians un supportive of the regime.

### [New round of negotiations between Venezuelan gov't opposition to kick off in Mexico](#)

August 13, 2021, MercoPress

Venezuelan Government officials and dignitaries of the opposition will convene in Mexico City to kick off another round of negotiations under the mediation of Norway, with the endorsement of the United States and the European Union to seek a peaceful solution to the worst economic, social and political crisis in the country.

## **Africa**

### [Rwandan forces recapture Mozambique's Mocímboa da Praia](#)

August 8, 2021, Africa Times

The Rwandan military says it captured the Mozambican port of Mocímboa da Praia on Sunday, while also taking the airport and the regional headquarters. The city has been an insurgent stronghold for more than two years, with catastrophic results for civilians living in this part of Cabo Delgado province and a costly shutdown of its economy.

### [Haftar in Egypt as UNSMIL condemns politically motivated attacks](#)

August 10, 2021, Africa Times

The United Nations mission in Libya expressed its concern over the whereabouts of a key Government of National Unity official who remains missing after an abduction last week. Rida Faraj Fraitis, chief of staff for a GNU deputy prime minister, disappeared on August 2 after attending a meeting at GNU headquarters in Tripoli.

### [IPCC report details projected climate impacts for Africa](#)

August 9, 2021, Africa Times

With what is now the perhaps unavoidable 2°C in global warming, and as early as 2050, southern Africa will see increases in drought and dangerous fire weather with impacts to agriculture, forestry, health and ecosystems.

### [African Union: Governments divided over Israel's observer status](#)

August 9, 2021, The African Report

Since Israeli ambassador Chad Aleli Admasu presented his credentials to AU Commission chair Moussa Faki Mahamat on 22 July, several members of the organisation have denounced what they term as a 'unilateral' decision by the Chadian diplomat. South Africa, which was the first to issue a statement, expressed its "dismay" and criticised the decision by the commission as "unjust and unjustified".

### [As Zambia votes, US threatens sanctions against those who undermine the election](#)

August 12, 2021, The African Report

The United States has warned of financial sanctions, visa restrictions and travel bans against Zambians who undermine the country's elections. It's an unusually strong statement, but will it set the trend for future elections? Zambia's democratic space has been narrowing in the past few years, following a close election in 2016 during which President Edgar Lungu was elected with a slim margin over the other main contender, Hakainde Hichilema – leader of the United Party for National Development.

### [Ethiopia: Food insecurity high as Tigray conflict spreads to Amhara and Afar](#)

August 14, 2021, The African Report

Weeks after Ethiopia declared unilateral ceasefire in its northern region of Tigray, it is calling for its citizens to take arms and join the ranks of its defence forces and militias to help end the belated success of the resurgent Tigray Liberation Front (TPLF).



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