

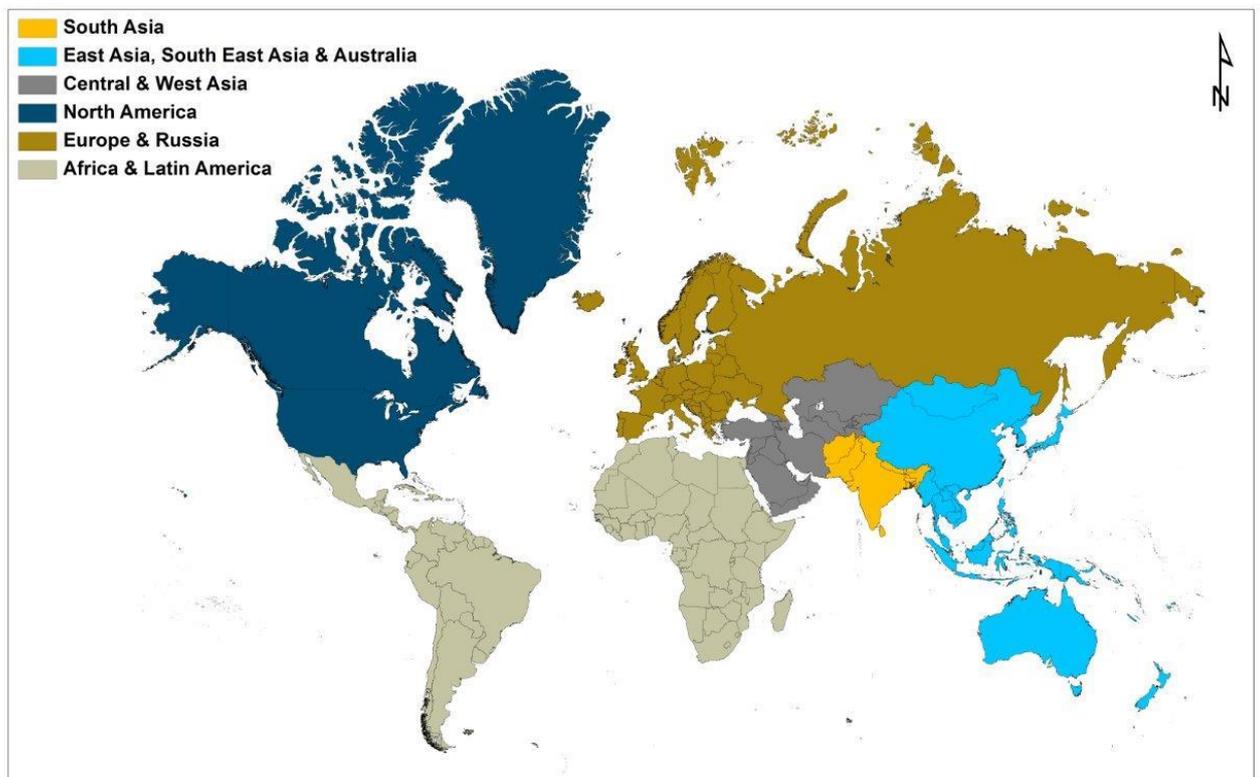


# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



Volume V, Issue 7 | February 12, 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 7

### 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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Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Angana Guha Roy at [angana@dpg.org.in](mailto:angana@dpg.org.in).

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## South Asia

### India

#### [China surprises India with its speed, moves out 200+ tanks from Pangong Tso](#)

February 12, 2021, The Hindustan Times

Nine months since they first got into an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation in east Ladakh, armoured units of the Indian Army and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) started withdrawing from north and south banks of the frozen Pangong Tso paving a way for peace and tranquillity to be restored all along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.

#### [BrahMos, Tejas, artillery guns, grenades & more – India ready with defence export list](#)

February 10, 2021, The Print

India has come out with a list of 152 items that are available to friendly nations as part of its plan to expand its current \$11 billion defence base to \$25 billion by 2025, with a \$5 billion export component.

#### [China to move to Finger 8, no patrolling in disputed area: Rajnath Singh](#)

February 11, 2021, The Economic Times

Chinese troops will move back from the Finger area and dismantle military infrastructure it created along the Pangong Tso banks as part of the disengagement plan reached nine months after the border crisis broke out, defence minister Rajnath Singh has informed the parliament.

#### [Ukraine looking at defence purchases from India](#)

February 7, 2021, The Hindu

Ukraine is looking to procure some military hardware from India in addition to efforts to deepen its presence in the Indian defence market, said Yuriv Husyev, General Director of Ukroboronprom, the umbrella corporation of Ukrainian state defence companies.

#### [Indian Navy Undertaking Mega Exercise In The Indian Ocean Region](#)

February 10, 2021, NDTV

The Indian Navy is carrying out a mega war game involving almost all operational assets like warships, submarines and aircraft over a vast geographical expanse in the Indian Ocean Region to test the force's combat readiness in a complex multi-dimensional scenario, officials said.

### [For Big Breakthrough In China Standoff, Government Says Nothing Conceded](#)

February 11, 2021, NDTV

India and China have reached an agreement on disengagement at Pangong Tso in Ladakh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in parliament, giving details of a breakthrough after a protracted stand-off and several rounds of talks between military commanders and diplomats.

### [India Protested Strongly To Sri Lanka Over Death Of Fishermen In Vessel Collision: S Jaishankar](#)

February 11, 2021, NDTV

India has strongly protested to Sri Lanka over the death of four Indian fishermen following a collision between their vessel and a Lankan naval craft last month, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said.

### [India has set an example in global diplomacy with Covid, climate change, says Jaishankar](#)

February 11, 2021, The Print

A robust response to the Covid-19 challenge will dominate global diplomacy this year and India has set an example on that front, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar wrote in an op-ed for Newsweek magazine.

### [US Secretary of State Tony Blinken, S Jaishankar discuss Myanmar](#)

February 10, 2021, The Economic Times

Describing India as one of the most important partners of the US in the Indo-Pacific region, the Biden Administration said that it welcomes India's emergence as a leading global power and its role as a net security provider in the region.

### [Trudeau dials India for vaccine; will do best to help, says Modi](#)

February 11, 2021, The Times of India

Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau, who has been critical of the Indian government on the farmers' protests, called PM Modi to request for Covid vaccines.

## **Pakistan**

### [Over 40 international navies coming to Pakistan for Aman 2021](#)

February 6, 2021, The News

The Pakistan Navy is holding its eighth edition of the annual multinational exercise 'Aman' from mid-Feb, in which navies of 46 countries are

participating. The Pakistan Navy seeks to enhance interoperability between regional and extra regional navies to promote peace and stability in the region and beyond.

#### [Two killed in Quetta, Sibi blasts](#)

February 6, 2021, The News

Two blasts in Balochistan – one in Quetta and the other in Sibi killed at least two people. The blast in Balochistan's capital, Quetta, occurred at the city's Inscorb Road that killed two people and left several injured..

#### [Energy ministry warned of LNG supply chain disruption](#)

February 11, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan LNG Limited (PLL) has warned the Ministry of Energy (MoE) of massive disruption in the liquefied natural gas supply chain in near future if Rs6.5 billion payments are not released by the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL).

#### [Pakistan conducts successful training launch of Babur cruise missile](#)

February 11, 2021, The Express Tribune

Pakistan on February 11 conducted a successful training launch of the Babur IA cruise missile. This is the third missile launch by the armed forces in less than a month, with launches of the Shaheen-3 and Ghaznavi ballistic missiles being conducted in late January and early February respectively.

#### [Four soldiers martyred in South Waziristan](#)

February 12, 2021, The Express Tribune

At least four soldiers were martyred when terrorists attacked a security forces post in the South Waziristan district.

## **Afghanistan**

#### [First doses of COVID-19 vaccine arrive in Afghanistan from India](#)

February 7, 2021, Reuters

Afghanistan received 500,000 doses of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine from India, the first to arrive in the country, which is still waiting for emergency approval from the World Health Organisation before it can use them.

### [Taliban Expresses Support For TAPI Pipeline During Turkmenistan Visit](#)

February 7, 2021, RFERL

A delegation of the Afghan Taliban has visited Turkmenistan for talks with the Turkmen Foreign Ministry focusing in part on security issues surrounding the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) natural-gas pipeline project.

### [Signing ceremony of MoU for the construction of the Lalandar \[Shatoot\] Dam in Afghanistan](#)

February 9, 2021, MEA

A signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding [MoU] for the construction of the Lalandar [Shatoot] Dam in Afghanistan took place over VTC on 9 February 2021. The MoU was signed by EAM Dr. Jaishankar and Foreign Minister Mr. Hanif Atmar, in the presence of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and President of Afghanistan H.E. Dr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani.

### [Islamabad allows APTTA extension for 3 months](#)

February 10, 2021, Pajhwok News

Pakistan has allowed a three-month extension in the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA), which expires on Feb 11. The APTTA extension came at a cabinet meeting that was reviewed the measures taken to control smuggling at borders with Iran and Afghanistan.

### [Dunford Emphasizes Conditionality of Troop Withdrawal](#)

February 6, 2021, Tolo News

The former chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Joseph Dunford, who co-chaired a study group on the Afghan peace process said there is a need to verify that the Taliban is meeting all conditions in the Doha agreement before resorting to a further troop reduction in Afghanistan.

### [Taliban Warns of More Violence If Doha Deal Is Violated](#)

February 6, 2021, Tolo News

The Taliban has warned of more violence if the Doha agreement is violated by the United States as the Biden administration is reviewing the groups' commitment to the deal.

### [US troops go one year without combat death in Afghanistan](#)

February 9, 2021, New York Post

No U.S. troops have died in combat in Afghanistan for a year, but the Taliban have threatened to target them again if Washington opts to keep international forces in the country after a May withdrawal deadline.

[U.N. convoy in Afghanistan attacked by gunmen, five Afghan security force members killed](#)

February 11, 2021, Reuters

Unknown gunmen attacked a United Nations convoy on the outskirts of Afghanistan's capital, killing five Afghan security force members who were escorting the international agency's vehicle. The attack took place near Kabul, according to an Afghan interior ministry official, adding they believed the insurgent Taliban were behind it.

## **Bangladesh**

[India facilitates Transit traffic from Bangladesh to Nepal](#)

February 9, 2021, News On Air

In a big boost to sub-regional connectivity and cooperation, India facilitated the transit of fertiliser export from Bangladesh to Nepal via the Rohanpur-Singhabad rail route. The first train loaded with fertiliser for export to Nepal was handed over by Bangladesh railways to Indian railways last week. Presently, 27,000 metric ton of fertiliser will be exported to Nepal through the rail transit route. Another lot of 25,000 metric ton of fertiliser is likely to be exported subsequently.

[Bangladesh, China in close contact over COVID-19 vaccine: Envoy](#)

February 12, 2021, New Age

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming said they are now in close discussion with Bangladesh over coronavirus vaccine assistance.

## **Nepal**

[China pressurised Nepal to accept its Covid-19 vaccine, leaked letter reveals](#)

February 08, 2021, The Hindu Businessline

When Nepal raised concerns over the vaccine's efficacy, China asked Nepal to transport the vaccines immediately, adding the relevant documents, including the legal disclaimer, may be provided simultaneously or later.

[Border issues with India will be resolved through dialogue, says Nepal PM KP Oli](#)

February 9, 2021, India Today

Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli said that the ongoing border disputes with India will be resolved through diplomatic talks. Although Nepal and India held

ministerial-level talks in New Delhi last month, the two sides could not hammer out the differences after the Himalayan nation unveiled a new map in May 2020.

## **Sri Lanka**

### [Sri Lanka clears Chinese energy project, 50 km off Tamil Nadu](#)

February 8, 2021, The Hindu

Sri Lanka's recent decision to pull out of the East Container Terminal (ECT) deal with India and Japan is not the only challenge to New Delhi's interests emerging this year. A week before reneging on the 2019 Colombo Port terminal agreement, Sri Lanka cleared a Chinese energy project in three islands off Jaffna peninsula that are barely 50 km from the Tamil Nadu coast.

## East & South East Asia

### China

#### [US urged to invite WHO mission to hunt for origins of coronavirus as China has done](#)

February 10, 2021, Global Times

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said that tracking the origins of the coronavirus is a complicated scientific issue, and asked the US to do the same as China and invite WHO experts to the country to conduct investigation and study the origins of the virus.

#### [Xi, Biden phone call on Chinese New Year's Eve 'tone-setter' for future bilateral ties](#)

February 11, 2021, Global Times

The phone call between Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden on Chinese New Year's Eve serves as a tone-setter for future bilateral relations in short term and shows that the two sides are willing to push bilateral ties forward in a more positive direction that can manage ties through constructive dialogue and cooperation. Chinese observers said the phone call, arranged on Chinese New Year's Eve, shows the Biden administration's goodwill toward the Chinese government and the Chinese people.

#### [Xi chairs China-CEEC Summit, charts course for post-pandemic cooperation](#)

February 10, 2021, Global Times

Chinese President Xi Jinping lauded the cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs), saying "17 plus 1 could make more than 18" at the China-CEEC Summit, which is the highest-level summit since the establishment of the cooperation mechanism.

#### [US dual carrier drills in S. China Sea 'symbolic, not militarily practical'](#)

February 9, 2021, Global Times

The US dual aircraft carrier operations in the South China Sea have more symbolic and political meanings rather than military significance, as the US is fully aware of the power of China's anti-ship ballistic missiles, Chinese military experts said.

### [China's largest maritime patrol ship in Taiwan Straits launched](#)

February 9, 2021, Global Times

A patrol ship in the Taiwan Straits, developed by the China Shipbuilding Industry Corp (CSIC), held its launching ceremony, and will become China's largest maritime patrol rescue vessel in the Straits after it is commissioned.

### [Xiplomacy: Experts say Xi-Biden call bodes well for potential China-U.S. cooperation](#)

February 12, 2021, Xinhua

The telephone conversation between Chinese President Xi Jinping and his U.S. counterpart, Joe Biden, bodes well for potential cooperation between China and the United States, experts from across the globe have said.

### [BBC World News banned from broadcasting in China](#)

February 12, 2021, China Daily

BBC World News has been banned from broadcasting in China, after the nation's broadcasting regulator said it had made serious content violations.

### [China's Coal War with Australia Fuels Shortage at Home](#)

February 10, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

China's ban on Australian coal imports is intensifying a crisis in its coal market, which is battling surging prices, supply shortages, conflicting policy goals and a cold winter.

### [Up to a Million People Fleeing Hong Kong Might Suit China Just Fine](#)

February 10, 2021, Bloomberg,

China's relentless crackdown may have succeeded in crushing Hong Kong's protests and neutralizing the political opposition. But it's also doing something else: prompting many here to consider fleeing abroad.

### [The Roots of Cultural Genocide in Xinjiang](#)

Foreign Affairs, February 10, 2021

On January 19, one day before leaving office, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared that China's actions against the Uyghur minority group constituted "genocide and crimes against humanity." Antony Blinken, Pompeo's successor, would later agree with this characterization in his confirmation hearing.

### [UK quietly expelled Chinese spies who posed as journalists](#)

February 05, 2021, The Guardian

Britain quietly expelled three Chinese spies last year who it said were posing as journalists, it has emerged, as tensions flare between the two countries over a range of media issues.

## **Japan**

### [Myanmar protesters gather in Tokyo against coup at home](#)

January 12, 2021, Japan Today

Thousands of people from Myanmar sang songs and waved glow sticks as they gathered in Japan's capital to protest the military coup in their home country.

### [Half of Japanese firms in Vietnam, India plan to boost operations: poll](#)

January 12, 2021, Japan Today

Over half of Japanese businesses in Vietnam and India have plans to expand their in-country operations, a recent survey showed, a sign of a shift toward reducing reliance on China as a production base in what is known as a "China plus one" strategy.

### [Japan and U.S. broadly agree to extend deal covering military base costs](#)

February 11, 2021, The Japan Times

Japan and the United States have broadly agreed to extend the current deal covering Tokyo's costs for hosting American troops for another year, Japanese government sources said.

### [China's 'zero corona' policy frustrates Japanese nationals in Beijing](#)

February 11, 2021, The Japan Times

China's "zero corona" policy, set out as the Lunar New Year holidays neared, has baffled Japanese workers in Beijing — most of whom have been forced to remain in the capital for more than a year.

### [Diversity is key to Japan's relations with the U.S.](#)

February 11, 2021, The Japan Times

It's now conventional wisdom that American foreign policy under the Joe Biden administration will revert to a more traditional and stable approach. That means restoring cooperation with friends and allies, as well as taking a professional and institutional course.

### [U.S. drill off Okinawa involves special operations submarine](#)

February 12, 2021, The Japan Times

The U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet has revealed that U.S. Marines in Okinawa Prefecture have conducted an unusual joint drill with the nuclear submarine USS Ohio, which is used in special operations, in waters near the prefecture.

### [S. Korea to rein in intelligence service in bid for reconciliation](#)

February 12, 2021, The Asahi Shimbun

South Korea is moving to restrain the authority of its intelligence department to curb excessive surveillance practices and extend an olive branch to North Korea.

### [Japan returns to tough talk over northern isles spat with Russia](#)

February 8, 2021, The Asahi Shimbun

A pre-recorded video message by Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga is shown at the Feb. 7 national rally in Tokyo demanding the return of the disputed Northern Territories.

### [Japan needs carbon pricing as global 'climate crisis' heats up](#)

February 9, 2021, The Asahi Shimbun

With the threat of global warming at such an urgency that experts are warning about a "climate crisis," this is no time for debating whether to introduce a plan to reduce carbon emissions by putting a price on them.

## **Korea**

### [S. Korea to develop indigenous long-range radar to boost air defense capabilities](#)

February 8, 2021, The Korea Herald

South Korea will develop an indigenous long-range radar for air defense in order to replace old ones brought in from abroad, the arms procurement agency said.

### [USFK live-fire exercise suspended amid residents' complaints](#)

February 9, 2021, The Korea Herald

A planned live-fire exercise involving Apache attack helicopters of the US Forces in Korea has been suspended following noise and other complaints from residents near the firing range in the southeastern city of Pohang, officials said.

### [Negotiations under way with Indonesia over fighter jet project: official](#)

February 9, 2021, The Korea Herald

South Korea is in talks with Indonesia about a joint project to develop a next-generation fighter jet, the head of the arms procurement agency said, amid speculation that the Southeast Asian nation wants to quit the project.

### [FM Chung, Blinken stress close cooperation for complete denuclearization of Korean Peninsula](#)

February 12, 2021, The Korea Herald

Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken stressed close bilateral cooperation for the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula during their first phone talks, the foreign ministry said.

### [Korea faces growing calls to join Quad plus](#)

February 7, 2021, The Korea Times

Korea's reticence about joining a possible expansion of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), involving the U.S., Japan, Australia and India, is increasingly being called into question, and triggering concerns that the country could be isolated from the U.S.' Indo-Pacific strategy.

### [North Korean leader raps economic agencies for 'passive, self-protecting tendencies'](#)

February 9, 2021, The Korea Times

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un rapped economic agencies for "passive and self-protecting tendencies" as he held a Workers' Party meeting to finalize this year's plans to carry out policy goals set forth at last month's rare party congress, state media said.

## **Southeast Asia**

### [ASEAN-India Hackathon: Blue economy, education focus of the first ever event](#)

February 11, 2021, Financial Express

The Hackathon was inaugurated by Minister of Education Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' along with other top dignitaries from India and ASEAN. From MEA, Secretary (East) Ms Riva Ganguly Das addressed the participants on the occasion.

### [Myanmar embraces Russian arms to offset China's influence](#)

February 9, 2021, Nikkei Asia

The military convoys captured on television cameras in the early hours of Myanmar's latest coup reveal deepening ties between the country's military and "loyal friend", Moscow.

### [Large onion shipment from India arriving soon in Malaysia to moderate recent price surge](#)

February 9, 2021, The Straits Times

A shipment of onions from India has arrived to help ensure sufficient supply and stable pricing of the commodity, said Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Alexander Nanta Linggi.

### [Chinese missile base near Vietnam border?](#)

February 6, 2021, The Times of India

The satellite images appeared to show a missile base being almost completed just 20km away from the Vietnam border. This is reportedly being done in Ningming county of China's Guanxi province.

### [Indonesia eyes \\$50 billion bilateral trade with India by 2025](#)

February 8, 2021, The Hindu Businessline

Indonesia is eyeing a \$50 billion bilateral trade with India by 2025, as the figure has already reached \$20 billion last year.

### [Thailand's top investor is Japan again, as China slows spending](#)

February 11, 2021, Nikkei Asia

Foreign direct investment in Thailand plunged last year amid the coronavirus pandemic, data released shows, but spending from Japan increased, allowing it to top China as the leading investor in the Southeast Asian country.

### [Cambodia Suspends Annual Military Exercises With China](#)

February 11, 2021, Voice of America

Cambodia's government has decided to suspend its two-week military exercise with China next month, citing a need to cut spending amid the coronavirus pandemic, despite claims by the opposition that it did so to avoid angering the new administration in Washington.

### [Brunei-China relations on upward trajectory](#)

February 11, 2021, Borneo Bulletin

Bilateral relations between China and Brunei Darussalam continues to go from strength to strength.

## Central & West Asia

### West Asia

#### [Bahrain, India Clean-Energy Working Group Pushes for Enhanced Private Sector Cooperation](#)

February 05, 2021, The Hindu Businessline

India and Bahrain have agreed to raise engagement in renewable energy capacity building and focus on cooperation between their governments as well as the private sector, particularly in the field of solar, wind and clean hydrogen.

#### [India Grants UAE Investment Licence with Easier Norms on Compliance](#)

February 10, 2021, Business Standard

The government has classified foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) from the UAE as eligible for taking up Category-I licence – a move that could boost investment from the region into India. The UAE is the second non-FATF (Financial Action Task Force) Country, after Mauritius, to be given the exemption.

#### [With Biden at Helm in US, India-Iran Trade Prospects May Improve: Exporters](#)

February 11, 2021, Hindustan Times

Iran is expected to be the biggest beneficiary of change in the US presidency that will not only help India to start its oil imports from Iran, but also boost its exports to the Gulf nation as a restoration of trade ties with Iran can easily add about \$3 billion of exports, the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said.

#### [EAM Jaishankar Greets Iran on the Eve of Islamic Revolution Anniversary](#)

February 10, 2021, BW BusinessWorld

Iranian Revolution refers to the popular movement in Iran (1979) to overthrow a pro-western monarchy and establish an Islamic republic. As a result of the Iranian Revolution, Iran became the Islamic Republic. February 2021 marks the 41st anniversary of the Iranian Revolution.

#### [Iran Producing Uranium Metal in Violation of 2015 Nuclear Deal, U.N. Inspectors Say](#)

February 11, 2021, NBC News

Inspectors for the International Atomic Energy Agency, or IAEA, verified on Feb. 8 that Iran had produced a small amount of uranium metal at a nuclear plant in Isfahan in its latest breach of 2015 JCPOA.

### [DailyHunt's Josh Raises \\$100 Million from Qatar Investment Authority and others](#)

February 08, 2021, Business Insider

VerSe Innovation, the parent company of DailyHunt which runs the short video app Josh, has raised \$100 million in a round led by Qatar Investment Authority, the sovereign fund of Qatar, and Glade Brook Capital Partners.

### [Yemen's Houthis Attack Saudi Arabia's Abha Airport](#)

February 10, 2021, Middle East Eye

Yemen's Houthi movement has claimed responsibility for a drone attack on Abha airport in southern Saudi Arabia that left a civilian aircraft on fire. The Saudi-led coalition said it had later brought the fire under control.

### [UN Security Council Fails to Agree on Joint Syria Declaration](#)

February 10, 2021, AL Jazeera

The UN Security Council failed to agree on a joint declaration on war-torn Syria, capping a day of negotiations in which the body's special envoy to the country called to jump-start the deadlocked peace process.

### [US Talks Tough over Turkey's S-400 Russian Missile System Purchase](#)

February 06, 2021, WION

The US government under President Joe Biden has maintained a tough stance against Turkey over its purchase of Russian S-400 missile defense system. The US has maintained its tough position since Donald Trump presidency.

## **Central Asia**

### [Kazakhstan seeks to export its goods to Poland, Central and Eastern Europe](#)

February 12, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

An online video conference was held on February 10 with the participation of Deputy Minister of Trade and Integration of Kazakhstan Assel Zhanasova and President of the Poland-Asia Chamber of Commerce and Industry Janusz Pehoczynski. The event was held at the initiative of the Embassy of Kazakhstan in Poland in order to promote Kazakhstan's non-oil exports to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Ministry of Trade and Integration said.

### [Kazakhstan: Third solar power plant launched in Shymkent](#)

February 10, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

A solar power plant with a capacity of 20 MW has started operation in the Aikol residential area in Shymkent city in southern Kazakhstan. The investment

project was implemented with the support of the city authorities and Kazakh Invest national investment promotion company, the company said.

#### [Kazakhstan: 3% of all energy generated by renewable sources in 2020](#)

February 10, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

In 2020, 25 renewable energy facilities with a total capacity of 583 MW were commissioned in Kazakhstan, including 10 wind, one hydro and 12 solar power plants. This was said at the government meeting on February 9 chaired by Prime Minister Askar Mamin.

#### [Uzbekistan: Election date moved, possibly with public mood in mind](#)

February 9, 2021, Eurasianet

Uzbekistan's presidential election is to be held earlier than expected, although the most likely outcome – Shavkat Mirziyoyev's easy reelection – is not going to surprise anybody.

#### [Russia using crisis in Tajikistan to advance EAEU agenda?](#)

February 12, 2021, Eurasianet

Tajikistan has come knocking again at the Kremlin's door in a bid to restore transportation links interrupted by the coronavirus pandemic.

#### [What does China's BRI mean for Central Asia's water future?](#)

February 11, 2021, Eurasianet

For Central Asia, China's Belt and Road Initiative is the biggest infrastructure drive in generations. And like the Soviet mega dams, mines, and devastating cotton monoculture that preceded it, the BRI is poised to foment problems of water sharing and pollution for generations to come.

## United States

### United States

#### [US secretary of state Blinken: Trump was right to take tougher approach on China](#)

February 9, 2021, The Times of India

Former US president Donald Trump was right to take a tougher stance on China, newly-appointed secretary of state Tony Blinken has said, reiterating the Biden administration's policy of engaging Beijing from a position of strength.

#### ['They're Going To Eat Our Lunch,' Biden Warns After Call With China's Xi](#)

February 10, 2021, NPR

President Biden said he spoke for "two straight hours" with Chinese President Xi Jinping – an opening conversation that provided insight about how the new administration plans to tackle the vast economic and security challenges posed by Beijing.

#### [Biden calls for China review during first Pentagon visit](#)

February 11, 2021, Associated Press

President Joe Biden announced plans for a Pentagon review of national security strategy on China as part of his push to recalibrate the U.S. approach with Beijing.

#### [Biden announces new Pentagon-run China task force](#)

February 11, 2021, Defense News

President Joe Biden announced at the Pentagon a review of how the military is postured to deter China in the Pacific region.

#### [Citing China threat, business groups, experts push Biden administration for digital policy](#)

February 11, 2021, Reuters

The Biden administration needs to develop an aggressive, coherent digital policy to counter China's growing technological power, industry groups and former U.S. officials say.

[Biden announces new sanctions against Myanmar generals after coup](#)

February 10, 2021, Reuters

President Joe Biden said he had approved an executive order paving the way for new U.S. sanctions on Myanmar generals after the military detained elected leaders and seized power on Feb. 1.

[PM Modi speaks to US President Joe Biden, says committed to a rule-based international order](#)

February 8, 2021, India Today

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he spoke to US President Joe Biden and discussed regional issues, climate change, and strategic partnership, among other issues.

[Impeachment trial: Democrats rest case with warning that Trump remains a threat](#)

February 12, 2021, The Guardian

House impeachment managers rested their case against Donald Trump, concluding that the deadly Capitol assault he stands accused of inciting was the culmination of a presidency beset by lies and violent rhetoric, and warning gravely that he would remain a threat to American democracy if not convicted and barred from holding future office.

## Europe & Russia

### Europe

#### [German Defence Ministry puts key US defense-cooperation projects to the next government](#)

February 6, 2021, Defense News

The German Defence Ministry will leave planned air defense investments and other high-profile programs involving U.S. vendors unresolved in the final months of the Merkel government, officials have told lawmakers.

#### [EU says it is ready to work with Biden administration to settle trade disputes](#)

February 12, 2021, Hindustan Times

The European Union acknowledged a move by the new US government to refrain from imposing additional tariffs on EU goods in a long-running dispute over aircraft tariffs, and said it was ready to work to resolve trade disputes.

#### [EU countries agree joint stance ahead of WhatsApp, Skype privacy talks](#)

February 11, 2021, Reuters

The European Commission proposed its ePrivacy Regulation in 2017, which would subject WhatsApp and Skype to the same rules as telecoms providers and restrict the tracking of users in order to provide personalised ads.

#### [Britain, EU stress commitment to solve N.Ireland border row](#)

February 11, 2021, Reuters

Britain and the European Union reiterated their commitment to resolve post-Brexit trade frictions over the Northern Ireland border in the wake of a row over COVID-19 vaccines.

#### [Brexit cost will be four times greater for UK than EU, Brussels forecasts](#)

February 11, 2021, The Guardian

The economic blow dealt by Brexit will be four times greater in the UK than the EU, according to the latest forecasts by Brussels.

#### [France, Germany seek Russia sanctions over Navalny, diplomats say](#)

February 11, 2021, Reuters

The European Union is likely to impose travel bans and asset freezes on allies of Russian President Vladimir Putin, possibly as soon as this month, after France and Germany signaled their willingness to move ahead, three diplomats said.

### [AstraZeneca agrees German manufacturing deal to fill vaccine gap](#)

February 10, 2021, Financial Times

AstraZeneca has enlisted German drug manufacturer IDT Biologika to help boost production of its Covid-19 vaccine and tackle supply shortages in Europe.

### [U.K. Sees Myanmar Coup as Irreversible, Risk of Violence Rising](#)

February 8, 2021, Bloomberg

The military coup in Myanmar has gone past the point of no return, according to a confidential U.K. foreign office assessment, in a sign that major democracies expect to have limited ability to influence the events unfolding inside the country.

### [UK envoy says preparing PM's visit, welcoming India to G7 among priorities](#)

February 11, 2021, Business Standard

The UK's new High Commissioner to India Alex Ellis said that preparing for Prime Minister Boris Johnson's upcoming visit to New Delhi and welcoming the country to the G7 and COP26 summits are among his immediate priorities.

## **Russia**

### [India to renew engagements with Russia after cooling tensions with China](#)

February 11, 2021, The Tribune

Having reduced tensions with China after the simultaneous disengagement of troops began in Eastern Ladakh, India will renew its engagement with Russia that will culminate in a visit by Vladimir Putin for a summit meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sources have said.

### [Russian envoy points to political crackdown in US](#)

February 12, 2021, TASS

A political crackdown has begun in the United States despite President Joe Biden's statements on freedom of expression, Russian Permanent Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Alexander Lukashevich said, addressing an online meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council.

### [Moscow to quash western meddling in internal affairs, says Zakharova](#)

February 11, 2021, TASS

The Western countries are conducting a massive anti-Russian campaign with the aim of destabilizing the internal political situation in Russia, but Moscow

will invariably quash such attempts, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told a news briefing.

#### [Russian diplomat warns EU against new sanctions](#)

February 11, 2021, TASS

Moscow cautions Brussels against new sanctions against Russia, warning that it will retaliate, Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

#### [Diplomat welcomes Biden administration not binding arms control to China's participation](#)

February 11, 2021, TASS

Russia welcomes Washington's current stance of not having any rigid link tying the future of arms control to China's involvement in the negotiation process following the arrival of the Biden administration, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said.

#### [Putin welcomes US administration following through on promise to extend New START](#)

February 11, 2021, TASS

Russian President Vladimir Putin has welcomed the US decision to extend the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START).

## Africa & Latin America

### Latin America

#### [Brazilian central bank communication triggers confusion in financial markets](#)

February 12, 2021, Merco Press

Brazil's Central Bank chief Roberto Campos Neto admitted that the January interest fixing rate policy meeting release may have generated more confusion in financial markets, instead of more transparency in communications.

#### [Argentina's goal of an IMF agreement by May, "is an ambitious timeline"](#)

February 11, 2021, Merco Press

Argentina is planning to reach an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on a new restructuring program by May, an ambitious timeline according to the IMF's Western Hemisphere Director Alejandro Werner.

#### [Argentina Narrowly Avoids Another Oil Industry Crisis](#)

February 11, 2021, Oil Price.com

Crisis-torn Argentina has managed to avert another disaster in its economically crucial hydrocarbon sector. Many institutional investors are unhappy with Buenos Aires' sovereign debt restructuring under

taken last year, which allowed the government of President Alberto Fernández to end Argentina's ninth debt default.

#### [Next president of Ecuador will have to govern with a fragmented legislature](#)

February 10, 2021, Merco Press

The recent general elections in Ecuador defined a legislative panorama radically different from the previous one, with two forces that will hold more than 50% of the total of 137 seats, the Correista alliance Union for Hope (UNES) and the indigenous party Pachakutik (PK), and the disappearance of Alianza PAIS, the force founded by former president Rafael Correa and taken over four years ago by outgoing president Lenín Moreno.

#### [Biden rescinds Donald Trump's emergency order on US-Mexico border wall](#)

February 12, 2021, Business Standard

US President Joe Biden rescinded the emergency order used by former President Donald Trump to justify the construction of the US-Mexico border wall, announced the White House.

### [Venezuela's oil production rises despite US sanctions](#)

February 11, 2021, Andolou Agency

Venezuela registered an increase in oil output in January despite the effect of US sanctions on the country's oil production.

## **Africa**

### [Uganda: Unease after alleged election abductions](#)

February 11, 2021, The Indian Express

Concern is rising in Uganda over the alleged forced disappearances of dissidents across the country in the lead-up to and following last month's general election.

### [Somalia rejects Kenya request to delay maritime case](#)

February 11, 2021, Andolou Agency

Somalia rejected the Kenyan government's request to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to postpone the maritime case between the two neighbouring East African countries.

### [Sudan's new government takes constitutional oath](#)

February 10, 2021, Andolou Agency

The new Cabinet in Sudan took the constitutional oath at the presidential palace in Khartoum.

### [African Union Task Team Has 20 Countries Lining Up for Vaccines](#)

February 11, 2021, Bloomberg

A task team established by the African Union to help the continent secure Covid-19 vaccines has received forms from 20 nations outlining their intentions to buy a total of about 200 million shots, according to John Nkengasong, the head of the Africa Centres for Disease Control.

### [India part of S Africa's plan to attract skilled persons and boost tourism: President Ramaphosa](#)

February 12, 2021, Outlook

India is among the countries South Africa is looking to as it seeks to import skills and boost tourism in the wake of the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, President Cyril Ramaphosa said in his State of the Nation address.

### [More violent protests in Darfur](#)

February 11, 2021, Dabanga

Darfur witnessed more unrests as protests turned violent in the city of Ed Daein, East Darfur. A 10-year-old child was killed by stray bullets during clashes between student protesters and the security forces. In North Darfur, authorities attempt to restore calm after violent events took place earlier this week.

### [6 reasons why Africa's new free trade area is a global game changer](#)

February 09, 2021, The World Economic Forum

AfCFTA, the largest global free trade area by countries participating, could transform the continent's economic prospects. Launched on January 1, the AfCFTA is an exciting game changer. The pact will create the largest free trade area in the world measured by the number of countries participating.



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