

EURASIA DIGEST

Monthly Compilation of News from Russia, Central Asia & Europe

Vol 3 | Issue 8 | August 2023



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Kremlin Said Grain Deal De Facto Over

On 17 July, Russia said that the [deal](#) brokered by the UN and Turkey, which allowed for the safe export of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea, was “de facto” over. The Kremlin’s spokesperson stated that Russia was pulling out since the conditions were not met. He also [warned](#) that exporting grain from Ukraine’s Russia-blockaded ports carried “risks” without appropriate security guarantees.

Russia’s Defence Minister Visited North Korea

Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, on 26 July, [hailed](#) Russia’s partnership with North Korea during a meeting with his counterpart Kang Sun Nam in Pyongyang. He stated, “the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is an important partner with which we share a common border and a rich history of cooperation.” Meanwhile, Russia and China [conducted](#) joint naval exercises in the Sea of Japan to “maintain stability and peace in the Asia-Pacific region.”

2nd Russia-Africa Summit Took Place In St. Petersburg

The second Russia-Africa [Summit](#) took place in St. Petersburg on 28-29 July. The conflict in Ukraine, security, economic and military cooperation, and Russia's exit from the Black Sea grain deal were issues that were part of the agenda. At the Summit, which witnessed the participation of 17 heads of African states, President Putin [offered](#) free grain to six African countries. He also [stated](#) that Moscow would "carefully" examine the proposals made by some African leaders to end the conflict in Ukraine.

Russian Factories Face Record Labour Shortages

According to a Yegor Gaidar Institute for Economic Policy survey, Russia’s industrial worker [shortage](#) reached a new high in July. The survey found that out of the 1,000 enterprises surveyed, 42 percent faced a shortage of workers in July, surpassing April’s record shortage of 35 percent. The most acute shortage of personnel was observed in the manufacturing, industrial, mining, and transportation sectors. Meanwhile, President Vladimir Putin [signed](#) a law that significantly raises fines for failing to appear at a military enlistment office after receiving a draft notice.

SCO Summit

India [chaired](#) the virtual summit of the Heads of State of the SCO on 4 July. In his speech, India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke on India’s efforts as the chairperson of the SCO to take multilateral cooperation to greater heights. He emphasised on the need to deal with the challenge of terrorism and the need for better connectivity. He welcomed SCO’s latest permanent member Iran and supported proposals for reform of the organisation.

Uzbekistan And Kazakhstan Conducted Joint Exercises

Khorezm was the [venue](#) for the joint exercises between special units of the Ministries of Defence of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan on 5 July. There was an exchange of skills, experience, and combat readiness. The units trained in close combat operations, reconnaissance, and medical aid.

Uzbekistan Presidential Elections

Shavkat Mirziyoyev was [re-elected](#) as the President of Uzbekistan after snap elections were held in July. On 10 July, the Uzbekistan Central Election Commission said Mirziyoyev was elected with 87 percent vote. According to the new referendum, the President can now hold office for seven years compared to the earlier practice of five years.

Central Asia-GCC Summit

The first Central Asia-GCC Summit was [held](#) on 19 July in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The key focus of the Summit was on strengthening the political and strategic relationship between the Central Asian countries and the GCC. There were discussions on regional and international security and stability and flexibility of supply chains. The importance of strengthening relations in the economic and business sector was also highlighted.

Turkey To Support Sweden's NATO Membership

Turkey, which had for months blocked [Sweden's](#) application to join NATO on the grounds of Stockholm hosting Kurdish militants, agreed to support Sweden's bid. The announcement was made post discussions between the Turkish and Swedish leaders in Vilnius.

Prime Minister Modi Visited France

On 13 July, Prime Minister Modi visited Paris as a guest of honour during France's Bastille Day. The two countries also celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Indo-French strategic partnership. PM Modi called France India's "[foremost global partner](#)," which was evident from the new cooperation and investment projects

announced in the transport, energy, travel, and space sectors. It was also announced that India would buy 26 Rafale Marine fighter jets and 3 Scorpene-class military submarines from France's Dassault and Naval Group, respectively. The new deals took place against the background of Paris, strengthening political and commercial ties with India.

Germany Launched New China Strategy

On 13 July, Germany [launched](#) its new China strategy document. It's key focus is on de-risking from China. It highlights China as a 'systemic rival' and focusses on the need to reduce Germany's economic dependence on China. Berlin is, however, still ready to work with Beijing on issues such as climate change while also maintaining trade partnerships.

Germany Sent Troops To Australia

As part of joint drills with 12 nations, [Germany](#) sent troops to Australia for the first time. German Army Chief Alfons Mais confirmed that 240 soldiers, comprising 170 paratroopers and 40 marines, participated in the Talisman Sabre exercise from July 22 to August 4. This underlines Berlin's increased focus on the Indo-Pacific amid rising regional tensions with China. In recent times, Germany's military presence in the Indo-Pacific has increased.

French President Macron Visited South Pacific

French President Emmanuel Macron recently [concluded](#) a historic visit to the South Pacific from 24- 28 July. The visit was designed to bolster France's Indo-Pacific strategy and reaffirm the country's regional role. President Macron visited French archipelago of New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea.