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Russian Court Overturns Ban On Kazakh Oil Exports

A [Russian court](#) on 11 July 2022 overturned a ruling on a 30-day ban on the unloading of oil deliveries from Kazakhstan, a source of tensions between the two countries. Earlier, Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev had ordered officials to find oil export routes bypassing Russia in a move that risked deepening tensions that have emerged between the two strategic partners over Ukraine.

Resumption of Ukrainian Grain Exports

Ministers from Russia and Ukraine signed an agreement on 22 July 2022 that would allow the resumption of [grain exports](#) from Ukrainian Black Sea ports. The key parties involved in brokering this agreement were the United Nations and Turkey. The deal will establish safe corridors along which Ukrainian ships can navigate the three designated Black Sea ports in and around Odessa. A joint command and control centre would be set up in Istanbul to oversee smooth operations and resolve disputes.

Russia To Exit International Space Station

The Chief of Russia's space agency Roscosmos, Yury Borisov stated on 26 July 2022 that [Russia would withdraw](#) from the International Space Station (ISS) after 2024 and build its own orbiting space outpost. It was reported that Russia's new space station would cost US\$ 6 billion. The ISS, which was launched in 1998 by the Russian and U.S. space agencies, has been a rare area of cooperation between Moscow and Washington amidst their sharply deteriorating ties. Meanwhile, the [European](#)

[Space Agency](#) (ESA) also pulled the plug on a joint Russian-European rover mission to Mars.

IMF Says Russia Doing Better Than Expected

The [IMF on 26 July 2022 stated](#) that Russia's economy appears to be weathering the storm of Western sanctions better than expected as Moscow benefits from higher energy prices. The IMF's latest World Economic Outlook upgraded Russia's GDP estimate for 2022 by 2.5 percentage points, although the Russian economy is still expected to contract by 6 per cent. The report also stated that Russia's domestic demand has shown some signs of resilience due to the "containment of the effect of the sanctions".

Protests Over Uzbekistan's Draft Constitutional Reform

The New Draft [Constitutional](#) Reform brought out by the Uzbek Government led to protests in the Autonomous District of Karakalpakstan on 1 July 2022. The District, comprising largely of minorities, would lose its constitutional right to referendum on secession. If passed, the reform would strengthen the centre's grip over the region's population.

Islamic State Targets Tajikistan

In line with its recent rocket assaults on Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) has intensified its rhetoric against Tajikistan. [ISKP has recognized](#) Al-Azaim as part of its central propaganda network, endorsing it in a tribute to Abu Muhammad al-Tajiki, the Tajikistan-born suicide bomber who attacked Kabul's Sikh temple in June. With Al-Azaim on Telegram, the group has

ramped up efforts to broaden appeal among speakers of Central Asian languages, promising new attacks.

Central Asian Leaders Meet in Kyrgyzstan

The [Central Asian Summit](#), comprising of the five heads of states of the Central Asian Republics, took place in Kyrgyzstan on 21 July 2022. The main focus of the meeting was on strengthening intra-regional cooperation amidst the geopolitical flux in Eurasia. It culminated in the signing of the Agreement of Friendship, Neighbourliness, and Cooperation for Development of Central Asia in the 21st Century. However, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan opted out of the agreement citing “domestic proceedings”.

India’s External Affairs Minister Visits Uzbekistan

[India’s External Affairs Minister](#) Dr. S. Jaishankar took part in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Foreign Minister’s meeting held in Tashkent on 28 July 2022. The meeting sought to review ongoing cooperation within the SCO in the run-up to the SCO meeting of the Council of Heads of State scheduled to be held in Samarkand in September 2022.

EU Says Lithuania Must Allow Rail Transit Of Russian Goods To Kaliningrad

The [European Union](#), on 13 July 2022, said that Lithuania has an obligation to allow the passage of sanctioned goods, with the exception of weapons, between Russia and its exclave of Kaliningrad. While transit by road is not permitted, legal guidance released by the EU stated that “no such prohibition exists for rail transport” from

Russia to Kaliningrad and that it could not be subject to an outright ban.

EU Agrees to Double Gas Imports from Azerbaijan

On 18 July 2022, the European Commission signed a deal with [Azerbaijan](#) to double natural gas imports by 2027. It would result in an increase in imports of Azeri natural gas via the Southern Gas Corridor to at least 20 billion cubic metres per year in 15 years. This will help the EU reduce its reliance on Russian energy.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Visits Moscow

[Hungarian Foreign Minister](#) Peter Szijjarto visited Moscow on 21 July 2022 to discuss purchase of additional Russian gas for Hungary. The ruling Hungarian party Fidesz said that “in order to ensure the security of Hungary's energy supply, the government has decided to purchase an additional 700 million cubic meters of natural gas”. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban had earlier said that Europe had “shot itself in the lungs” with sanctions against Russia over its war in Ukraine. Hungary currently imports 65 per cent of its oil and 80 per cent of its gas from Russia.

Italian President Dissolves Parliament

On 21 July 2022, following the resignation of [Prime Minister Mario Draghi](#), the Italian President dissolved the parliament, triggering fresh elections. Draghi's resignation came after several parties in his coalition - the 5-Star movement, centre-right Forza Italia and the far-right League boycotted a vote of confidence on 20 July.