



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

## GLOBAL HORIZONS NOVEMBER 2025

*Author*

Nalin Surie

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**Delhi Policy Group**

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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.

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*The views expressed in this publication are those of the author and should not be attributed to the Delhi Policy Group as an Institution.*

### Cover Images:

Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi was greeted by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, at the Johannesburg's Expo Centre for the G20 Leaders' Summit, in South Africa, on November 22, 2025. Source: [Narendra Modi](#)

The President of India, Droupadi Murmu was received by President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço of Angola at the Presidential Palace in Luanda during her State Visit to Angola, on November 9, 2025. Source: [Rashtrapati Bhavan](#)

Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck of Bhutan jointly inaugurated the 1020 MW Punatsangchhu-II Hydroelectric Project, in Thimphu, Bhutan, on November 11, 2025. Source: [Narendra Modi](#)

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## Global Horizons

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by

Nalin Surie

The United States continued to initiate the movement of pieces on the international chess board, while other major powers such as Russia, the European Union and China continued to scramble to prevent any unacceptable checkmate. Russia held out against pressure to accept a ceasefire in the Ukraine war, still expecting the United States and its western allies to make concessions to it on the security balances in Europe going forward. Europe continued with efforts to ensure that its interests are not compromised, while staring at the reality of the United States acting virtually on its own, in so far as security balances in Eurasia are concerned. Europe's efforts to strike out on its own to ensure its own future security continued.

The new prime minister of Japan, Ms. Sanae Takaichi, added to the volatility by suggesting that any attempted Chinese military takeover of Taiwan would directly impact Japanese security, and that in the latter eventuality, Japan may have no option but to defend itself. Chinese anger at this manifested quickly and in harsh terms. Sanctions were initiated in several sectors that would impact relations with Japan and the Japanese economy. A formal demarche, laying out China's long held position that the post Second World War order stipulates agreement among the victors that Taiwan is a part of China, was circulated as an official document at the UN. Importantly, it also led to President Xi Jinping initiating a call with President Trump on November 24, during which he forcefully reiterated China's position on Taiwan, namely "that Taiwan's return to China is an integral part of the post-war international order" and that the US is party to that. (Japan has contested the latter proposition.) The interesting thing about this episode is that China understands that, at least as things presently stand, reunification with Taiwan requires the United States to be on board as a necessary condition.

On the Gaza issue, the United States once again demonstrated that it was in the drivers seat when the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2803 on 17 November, which wholly endorsed President Trump's 20 point plan by a vote of 13 in favour with two permanent members, namely Russia and China abstaining. Given its need to keep the United States in good humour on account of the Ukraine war, the Russian abstention is perhaps understandable. The Chinese abstention is

perhaps reflective also of the same syndrome of keeping the US in good humour but also exposes its own less than meaningful role in the region. The explanations of vote by these two countries in the UNSC were, therefore, quite convoluted, especially since both countries are known to be resolute supporters of the Palestinian cause.

The very difficult task of implementing resolution 2803 will now begin. There are too many loose ends. The onus is squarely on the United States. Success is not guaranteed, nor is the two state outcome. On the latter, the resolution simply states in operative paragraph two that after the reform program of the Palestine Authority is faithfully carried out and the Gaza redevelopment has advanced, the conditions may finally be in place for a credible pathway to Palestinian self determination and statehood!

The killings in Gaza and the West Bank continued as Israel showed no signs of halting its relentless pursuit of destroying Hamas and attacking Hezbollah targets in Lebanon. It also did not relent on attacking targets in Syria, when it believed that its security was being compromised.

During the month, the United States refocused on efforts to end the Ukraine war. A peace plan was proposed by the United States reportedly after some discussions with the Russian side. The Europeans and Ukraine hustled to modify it in an effort to ensure that they were not left out. A set of proposals was discussed by special envoys of the United States with President Putin in Moscow on December 02. The outcome was variously described, but the bottom line is that there is still no overall agreement on a ceasefire and the way forward. Russia continues to have some serious reservations. But, discussions are to continue in Miami, Florida on December 05, with Ukraine. The Ukrainians and Europeans are trying their best to ensure that they are not left out of any final decisions taken between Russia and United States on how to end the war. Importantly, it has to be borne in mind that some of the decisions that may emerge out of any Ukraine cease fire package may impinge on the international financial system and aspects of international law.

During the month Russian attacks on Ukraine, including on civilian infrastructure and cities, continued. Casualties continued to mount. Ukraine for its part launched counter-attacks and essentially held its ground but at considerable cost. Russian efforts to acquire more territory in Ukraine faced serious resistance. However, Ukrainian manpower is dwindling, production capacities are challenged and the flow of supplies from the West do not appear to be adequate or timely enough for them to launch a major counter offensive.

Both Russia and Ukraine desperately need for the fighting to end. While Russia is hurting, it has greater depth and strength as also its back-up alliance with China. Ukrainian ability to resist and fight back has been adversely affected since the new US administration took over at the beginning of the year. Europe continues to assist Ukraine, but has serious limitations on the supply of military equipment on account of inadequate production. A cease fire agreement imposed by the US without taking into account European and Ukrainian interests will have a serious impact on the future of US relations with Europe, of NATO and of European security. But, it could also revive US-Russia relations and weaken the Russia-China partnership.

The process of enabling Syria to break away from its long Assad past continued. The United States, European Union and Russia are among those on board with this process. On November 6, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2799 removing Syria's Transitional President Al-Sharaa and his former ISIL colleague from the sanctions list. The resolution was passed by 14 votes, but China, a permanent member abstained even though it is clear that it had serious reservations. The Chinese Ambassador to the UN made it clear that there were three issues bothering China. First, that counter terrorism challenges must be addressed as a priority. In this context, he called upon the transitional government in Syria to effectively fulfil its counter terrorism obligations by taking effective measures to combat all international terrorist organisations designated by the Council including the ETIM. The latter a clear reference to the threat in Xinjiang. Second, the need to focus on humanitarian and development issues in Syria, and third for the need for the UN to play a role in Syria's political process. Going forward, the latter two considerations could enable China to get a leg into Syria.

At their meeting on November 12, at Niagara, Canada, the G7 Foreign Ministers issued a joint statement that also addressed regional security and prosperity across the Indo Pacific. They emphasised the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and opposed any unilateral attempts to change the status quo, particularly by force or coercion. The G7 remain concerned about China's military buildup, and the rapid increase of its nuclear weapons arsenal. China was asked to demonstrate its commitment to stability through improved transparency.

The G7 ministers also addressed issues of migration & economic security, maritime security & prosperity and economic resilience, energy security & critical minerals.



Canada's efforts to diversify its relationships with the rest of the world continued. A joint declaration was issued following the fourth Canada-European Union joint ministerial meeting on November 12. Early progress made regarding defence cooperation was welcomed. It was stressed that the Arctic must remain a region of peace, stability and cooperation and activities conducted in accordance with international law. The importance of enhancing cooperation to maintain a free, open, inclusive, and resilient Indo-Pacific was recognised, particularly because of the region's importance to global stability and economic security. The urgent need to defend and reinforce the global rules based order based on international law and the universal principles of the UN charter was reaffirmed and it recognised that strong multilateral institutions remain vital for addressing global challenges.

The fourth EU-Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum was held in Brussels on November 20-21. The Chair's statement points out that amid geopolitical shifts and economic uncertainty, Europe and the Indo-Pacific find their futures are increasingly intertwined. The EU has, since the last ministerial meeting in February 2024, agreed on security and defence partnerships with Japan and the Republic of Korea; concluded negotiations on the EU – Indonesia comprehensive economic partnership agreement; signed a clean trade and investment partnership with South Africa; and provided financial and technical support to the ASEAN power grid development. The EU, it was stated, is determined to contribute further to the security and stability of the region and will roll out major Global Gateway investment projects there. The EU will also seek to establish a new structured initiative to enhance cooperation on the protection of critical maritime infrastructure among partners in Europe, in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

The process of expanding partnerships and reducing technological dependencies continued. India, Australia and Canada issued a joint statement on November 22 on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Johannesburg, announcing agreement to enter into a new trilateral technology and innovation partnership: ACITI Partnership. The three sides agreed to strengthen their ambition in cooperation on critical and emerging technologies to complement existing bilateral initiatives. The emphasis will be on green energy, innovation and building resilient supply chains in critical minerals. The three countries will also examine the development and mass adoption of artificial intelligence. Officials are to meet in the first quarter of 2026 to take the initiative forward.

COP 30 of the UNFCCC was held in Belem, Brazil from November 10-21. The United States, the world's second largest polluter under the new climate change

naysayer US Administration of President Trump, boycotted the meeting. Notwithstanding this and the serious ongoing economic, technological and security churn currently underway in the world, it can be justifiably argued that the outcomes were a success, albeit mixed. That is also a result of the nature of the beast called international cooperation to combat climate change. There are too many divergent interests. Not every country or group got what it wanted.

The Brazilian Presidency projected the outcomes as a success for multilateralism and a strong basis for future action. Positives from their perspective include the establishment of a formal mechanism to support developing countries in a fair transition to cleaner economies; a political signal, though not binding, to triple adaptation finance by 2035; and dialogues on trade and climate. The inability to develop a separate roadmap for an orderly transition away from fossil fuels and deforestation was seen as a major shortcoming, but Brazil remains committed to pursuing this through its presidency.

India participated actively in the conference and expressed satisfaction with the major outcomes, especially the establishment of the Just Transition Mechanism. It was happy that the subject of unilateral trade restrictive climate measures could be discussed. These are violative of the principles of equity and CBDR – RC, enshrined in the UNFCCC and its Paris agreement. It is India's long-standing position that the burden of climate change mitigation cannot be shifted onto those who have the least responsibility in causing the problem. India is committed to science based and equitable climate action, and for climate ambition to be inclusive, just and equitable.

The G20 summit was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on November 22-23. India's PM Modi attended. The Presidents of the US, China and Russia did not.

The United States chose not to attend the summit on the "widely discredited" (BBC) grounds that South Africa was committing genocide against its white (Christian) population whose farms were being taken away from them. It did not, however, quit the G20. The next presidency of the G20 starting December 01, 2025 is to be held by the US and it intends to take it on with great gusto. But, President Trump has announced that South Africa will not be invited to the G20 summit in 2026 in Miami.

Notwithstanding the US boycott, the Johannesburg Summit was a success. The German Chancellor said, "it wasn't a good decision for the American government to be absent". (Reuters.)

This was the first time that the G20 summit was held in Africa. A detailed Leaders Declaration was adopted. It was reiterated that the G20 is the premium forum for international economic cooperation. It would continue to operate in the spirit of multilateralism; on the basis of consensus, with all members participating on an equal footing in all its events, including Summits in accordance with international obligations.

According to President Ramaphosa, South Africa's effort at the summit was to place Africa's and the Global South's growth and development at the heart of the G20 agenda. The development agenda of the previous Presidencies of Indonesia, India and Brazil were built upon. Debt vulnerability of low and middle income countries was an area of focus. The summit outcome, according to Ramaphosa, "reaffirms our commitment to multilateral cooperation, and our recognition that our share goals outweigh our differences".

PM Modi participated actively in the summit. He made several important and concrete proposals for development cooperation namely: 1. the creation under the G20 framework of a Global Traditional Knowledge Repository; 2. the G20-Africa Skills Multiplier Initiative to collectively prepare one million certified trainers in Africa over the next decade; 3. establishment of a G20 Global Healthcare Response team; 4. G20 Initiative on countering the Drug-Terror nexus; 5. setting up the G20 Open Satellite Data Partnership; 6. A G20 Critical Minerals Circularity Initiative; and 7. promotion of comprehensive strategies that strengthen global security by connecting nutrition, public health, sustainable agriculture, and disaster preparedness. Implementation of these practical proposals would have a multiplier development impact.

Looking ahead at the US Presidency of G20, Trump has already announced three core themes: unleashing economic prosperity by limiting regulatory burdens, unlocking affordable and secure energy supply chains and pioneering new technologies and innovations.

US policy towards oil rich Venezuela seems to have moved into higher gear. The US asserts that the Maduro regime actually lost the last election and is illegitimate. Venezuela is seen as an important source of illegal immigration into the US, to stop which is high on the agenda of the Trump Administration. Its military operations against drug traffickers at sea, who it is alleged are controlled by Maduro, are a warning signal. These are likely to be violative of international law but that is of little concern to the US. Reports suggest President Trump spoke to Maduro and has warned him to leave or else. Land operations against Venezuela have been



threatened. Some analysts suggest that this is the beginning of a new Monroe doctrine. Earlier, Panama and Colombia have also been in the sights of the Trump Administration, which very clearly wants to control the Western Hemisphere. Europe and China are no doubt holding their breath. The negative impact on need for conformity with international law and the UN Charter would be far reaching.

India's national capital, Delhi, was hit by a vicious terrorist car attack in the iconic Red Fort area on November 10. Innocent lives were lost and several more injured. The Union Cabinet passed a resolution on November 12 unequivocally condemning the dastardly and cowardly act. Investigations have been handed over to the national investigation agency, NIA, so that the perpetrators, their collaborators and their sponsors can be brought to justice without delay. Speaking in Thimpu, Bhutan on November 11 at a public function during his visit to that country, Prime Minister Modi made it clear that Indian agencies will get to the bottom of this conspiracy and the perpetrators will not be spared; all those responsible will be brought to justice. Several arrests have been made, and the outlines of the conspiracy are reportedly becoming clearer.

The very special nature of India's relations with Bhutan was in focus during the month. Prime Minister Modi visited Bhutan on November 11-12 to participate in the celebrations to mark the 70th birthday of his Majesty the fourth king of Bhutan. In his public address on the occasion, Modi recalled that India and Bhutan are connected not just by borders, but also by cultures and that our relationship is one of values, emotions, peace, and progress. He stressed that the friendship between the two countries has great depth and strength. Both have supported each other in times of difficulty and faced challenges together.

The energy partnership between the two countries is of special importance, particularly for Bhutan, which produces 100% of its electricity from renewable energy. The partnership in this sector which so far focused on hydroelectricity has now been extended to solar energy. The focus is also now being placed on enhancing connectivity between the two countries. Bhutan is to be connected to India's extensive rail network both in Bhutan's west and east and border infrastructure is being developed. These projects are expected to cost over Rupees 4000 crore and will be fully funded by the Government of India.

Prime Minister Modi reiterated, in public, India's full support for His Majesty King Five's vision of Gelephu Mindfulness City and for further strengthening our shared spiritual heritage. In the latter context, India has agreed to provide land for

a third Bhutanese Temple and Guest House in India, in Varanasi. There are Bhutanese temples already in Bodh Gaya and Rajgir.

During the visit, the 1020 MW Punatsangchhu-II hydroelectric project was inaugurated and an understanding arrived at on resumption of work on the main dam structure of the 1200 MW Punatsangchhu-I hydroelectric project. In addition to India's already announced grant assistance for Bhutan's five year plan, there was an announcement of a first ever concessional line of credit of Rupees 40 billion with the use focus on the energy sector. Projects will be selected by the Royal Government of Bhutan.

The President of India, Shrimati Droupadi Murmu, paid a state visit to Angola on November 10. (The Angolan President had visited India in May.) This was the first such visit from India at this level. She participated as a honoured guest in the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of Angola's independence. The concrete areas of bilateral cooperation are trade and economic cooperation, energy, health, agriculture, diamonds, infrastructure development including railway network, technology, digital public infrastructure and defense. Angola has shown interest in cooperation in space. MOUs were signed on cooperation in fisheries/aquaculture/marine resources & consular matters. (Note: during the Angolan President's visit India had extended a USD 200 million LOC to Angola.)

From Angola, the President went on to pay a state visit to Botswana on November 13. This too was the first such visit from India. She addressed the National Assembly in a special session. Detailed discussions were held with the Botswana President. Cooperation is to be further strengthened in trade and investment, capacity building, skill development, agriculture, health, infrastructure development, renewable energy, defence and digital technology. An MOU was signed on cooperation in the health sector to facilitate access of quality and affordable medicines. Cooperation in diamonds is an ongoing project. Both with Angola and Botswana local capacity building for cutting and polishing diamonds has been happening. Botswana will cooperate with India's Project Cheetah. Eight cheetahs were handed over.

The President's visits to Angola and Botswana were an important part of India's ongoing and growing outreach to Africa.

On November 17, India responded to the decision of the kangaroo court in Bangladesh that sentenced ousted PM Sheikh Hasina to death, in a measured manner. It was stated that "As a close neighbour, India remains committed to the

best interests of the people of Bangladesh, including in peace, democracy, inclusion and stability in that country. We will always engage constructively with all stakeholders to that end". India will no doubt take all necessary steps to protect its interests in Bangladesh, a neighbour with which it has unbreakable historical, civilisational, economic and strategic ties.

PM Modi met the PM of Canada Mark Carney on the sidelines of the G20 summit on November 23. It was an important meeting in the ongoing process of normalising bilateral relations. They discussed cooperation in trade and investment, defence, education, space, S&T and energy. They agreed to begin negotiations on a high ambition CEPA, aimed at doubling bilateral trade to USD 50 billion by 2030. Cooperation in the civil nuclear sector is to continue including through long term uranium supply arrangements. PM Carney has been invited to visit India.

There is need to make up for lost time in fulfilling the mutually beneficial opportunities for bilateral cooperation between India and Canada without much further ado.

As we approach the end of 2025, the world remains on edge as certainties have become uncertainties, the violation of international law has become the norm and international institutions are unable to have their writ run. India faces a very challenging 2026, fraught with danger but also opportunities. It has, though, the strength and wherewithal to straddle opportunities and ward off dangers while maintaining its independence of decision making. But the ride going forward could get rough.

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