

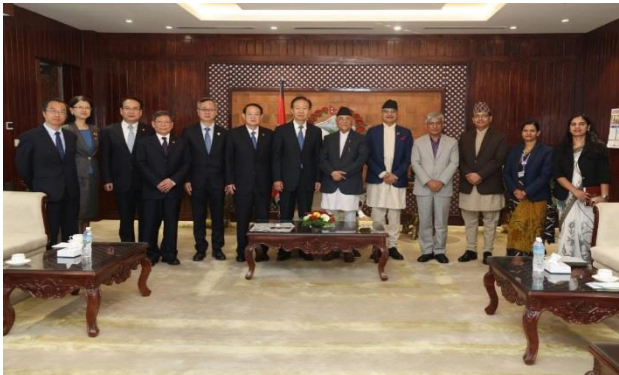


Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

India's Proximity Archives

May 21, 2025



Volume III, Issue 21 | May 21, 2025

Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003

www.delhipolicygroup.org



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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.

India's Proximity Archives

India's Proximity Archives covers major developments in South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, West Asia, Central Asia and Indian Ocean Region of strategic relevance to India, compiled from open-source media. The research team includes Shreyas Deshmukh, Sanket Joshi, Jayantika Rao T.V, Divya Rai and Arshiya Chaturvedi, Research Associates. Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Sanket Joshi at sanket@dpg.org.in.

Cover Images:

South Asia: A fifteen-member Chinese delegation, led by Vice Chairman Xiao Jie of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, held a meeting with Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, in Kathmandu on May 15, 2025. Source: [X/@sidhant](#)

Southeast Asia: President of the Republic of Indonesia, Prabowo Subianto, together with Prime Minister of Australia, Anthony Albanese, delivered a joint press statement after holding a series of bilateral meetings at the Merdeka Palace, Jakarta, on May 15, 2025. Source: [Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia](#)

West Asia: UAE's President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and US President Donald Trump met in Abu Dhabi on May 15, 2025. Source: [UAE Embassy in the US](#)

Indian Ocean Region: The 8th meeting of the India-US Joint Working Group on Aircraft Carrier Technology Cooperation (JWGACTC) [was held](#) in New Delhi, India. Source: [PIB](#)

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

On May 15, India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, engaged in a [telephonic discussion](#) with the Taliban's Acting Foreign Minister, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi. The clear condemnation of the Pahalgam terrorist attack by the Taliban administration in Afghanistan received appreciative acknowledgement from Dr. Jaishankar. The Pakistani military's spokesperson previously alleged that India had conducted attacks on Afghan soil, a claim that [Afghan](#) and Indian officials unequivocally refuted. EAM Dr. Jaishankar, in this context, recognised Acting FM Muttaqi's strong dismissal of efforts to generate distrust between India and Afghanistan by disseminating false and unsubstantiated information. Later, as a special measure, [India authorised](#) the entry of 160 Afghan trucks carrying dried fruits and nuts via the Attari border. The Taliban's Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation issued a statement on May 20th, reporting that the Indian government had provided [food aid](#) to 5,000 Afghan individuals repatriated from Pakistan.

A fifteen-member Chinese [delegation](#), led by Vice Chairman Xiao Jie of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, conducted a visit to Nepal between May 14 and 18. The delegation engaged [in discussions](#) with several key figures, including Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, Speaker of the House of Representatives Devraj Ghimire, and Chairperson of the National Assembly Narayan Prasad Dahal. The delegation attended the Sagarmatha Sambaad conference and toured significant cultural and historical landmarks in the Kathmandu Valley.

On May 17th, India [initiated restrictions](#) on the land-based import of certain Bangladeshi products. The imposition of these restrictions followed Bangladesh's restriction of Indian cotton imports through seaports, resulting in the closure of land ports. The notification stipulates that all ready-made garments (RMG) imports from Bangladesh are prohibited via land ports; seaport entry is permitted solely through Nhava Sheva and Kolkata. This step is anticipated to significantly affect trade, given that Bangladesh's annual ready-made garment exports to India, valued at approximately [USD 700 million](#), predominantly utilize land ports (93%). The restrictions will not apply to Bangladeshi goods transiting through India to Bhutan and Nepal.

From May 21 to June 5, India will send [all-party delegations](#) to update partner countries on Operation Sindoor. Fifty-one political leaders comprise the

delegations briefing [thirty-two countries](#) and the European Union. All Permanent Five (P5) countries, with the exception of China, will be visited. The delegations will convey India's unified national position and steadfast resolve in confronting terrorism in all its manifestations.

Other Developments

[World Bank resumes operations in Kabul amid economic challenges](#)

[Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli inaugurated the first edition of the Sagarmatha Sambaad conference in Kathmandu on May 16](#)

[Reliance Power to build Bhutan's largest solar project in ₹2,000 cr JV](#)

[Pakistan Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir promoted to Field Marshal](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

Making Jakarta as his first overseas visit of his second term, newly re-elected Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese [arrived in Indonesia on May 14](#) for a three-day visit. On May 15, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Prabowo Subianto, and the Prime Minister Anthony Albanese MP, met for the Indonesia-Australia Annual Leaders' Meeting. Following the meeting, a [2025 Annual Leaders' Meeting Joint Communique](#) was released. Major issues discussed included the Indo-Pacific, wherein the two leaders reaffirmed the importance of working together to promote an Indo-Pacific region that is peaceful, stable, prosperous and rules-based with ASEAN at its centre that upholds international law.

On [May 19](#), Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto commenced a series of official visits in Thailand, marking the first state visit by an Indonesian president in 20 years. President Prabowo held a meeting with King of Thailand Maha Vajiralongkorn and Queen of Thailand Suthida Bajrasudhabimalalakshana, where the leaders reiterated their commitment to enhancing collaborations in various strategic field. In the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra and President Parabowo, the leaders agreed to elevate their relationship to a strategic partnership. [In a statement by Prime Minister Paetongtarn](#), she said "The decision to elevate the two countries' relations to strategic partnership reflects our shared commitment to strengthen cooperation in several aspects on issues of mutual interest to the people of both countries." She also said that Thai and Indonesian police will strengthen cooperation in suppressing transnational crimes, especially online scams, human trafficking and drug trafficking.

Five days after he suffered a striking setback in the country's midterm elections, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. finally admitted that his candidates for the Senate could have "performed better" with only securing 5 seats. On May 17, President Marcos "We all wish we had better results. But we live to fight another day". He added that "It's time to put all of the issues that were raised during the elections and only talk about not political issues but developmental issues -- health care issues, education issues, agricultural issues, supply issues, all of these things."

Other Developments

[Vietnam says second round of trade talks started in Washington](#)

[From Vietnam to Saudi Arabia, how countries are queuing up to buy BrahMos after Operation Sindoor](#)

East Asia

by

Arshiya Chaturvedi

On May 17, China's state broadcaster [CCTV reported that the construction of the Mohmand Hydropower Project in Pakistan has entered an accelerated phase](#). The state-owned China Energy Engineering Corporation, which holds the construction contract for the dam, has begun concrete filling at the site. Launched in September 2019, the project was originally scheduled for completion in 2026 but is now targeted for delivery in 2025. This development comes amid recent escalation between India and Pakistan following a deadly terrorist attack in Kashmir. India responded by suspending the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, which governs water sharing between the two countries, along with other retaliatory measures.

Taiwan's [Ministry of National Defence \(MND\) reported that on May 20, it had detected six People's Liberation Army \(PLA\) aircraft, eight People's Liberation Army Navy \(PLAN\) vessels](#), and three official Chinese ships operating in the vicinity of Taiwan. In the post on X, the MND noted that six of the PLA aircraft had crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait, entering Taiwan's southwestern and eastern air defence identification zone (ADIZ). Taiwan authorities have been monitoring the situation, and their armed forces have deployed aircraft, naval vessels, and coastal missile systems.

Meanwhile, [Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te, in a press conference on the first anniversary of his presidency, reiterated his commitment to peace](#). He stated that war has no winners and that Taiwan is open to dialogue with China based on "reciprocal dignity" and replacing of confrontation with constructive exchanges. China responded, voicing its willingness to engage in peaceful talks with Taiwan on the condition of adherence to the 'One China' principle. A Chinese government spokesperson, however, condemned Lai for escalating cross-Strait tensions and pursuing Taiwan independence for partisan gain.

North Korean leader [Kim Jong Un on May 17 supervised anti-aircraft combat and air strike drills by North Korea's first Air Division](#), and called all military units to accelerate war preparations, according to state media. The drills featured a MiG-29 firing what is believed to be a North Korean version of a Russian air-to-air missile. The current month alone, Kim has overseen a missile test, inspected tank and munitions plants, and made a rare visit to the Russian embassy in Pyongyang. A South Korean news agency reported North Korea's

condemnation of the US for again placing it on a list of nations not fully cooperating with counterterrorism efforts, warning of escalating hostility.

Other Developments

[South Korea presidential candidate Kim says open to discussing US troop cost](#)

[China-Cambodia drills counter hype with openness](#)

[Nvidia Opens Up Its Platform, Plans AI Supercomputer in Taiwan](#)

[Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong Meets with Pakistani Ambassador to China Khalil-ur-Rahman Hashmi](#)

[Visit of IAEA officials and international experts for a review on the discharge of ALPS treated water from TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station into the Sea](#)

[The 6th Japan-Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Level Consultation](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

US President Donald Trump [concluded his visit to the Middle East](#) (Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE) on May 16. During the visit, the US deepened its partnership with Qatar with USD 1.2 trillion “economic exchange”; Saudi Arabia promised to invest USD 600 billion in the US; and a number of key projects were signed with the UAE, after its commitment to a ten-year, USD 1.4 trillion investment framework in the US. According to analysts, Gulf nations' engagement with President Trump demonstrates their desire to work with the US across business, defence, and high-technology sectors.

As Hamas refused to agree to a new hostage deal with Israel, the Israel Defence Forces launched the ["Gideon's Chariots" ground operation](#) in Gaza on May 17. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged to take [control of all of Gaza strip](#) if Hamas does not release the remaining hostages. He reiterated the need for Hamas to lay down its arms, exile its leaders, and demilitarise Gaza. The leaders of [Britain, France, and Canada rejected Israel's escalation](#) as “egregious” and promised a concrete response if Israel does not end the renewed offensive in Gaza. Meanwhile, US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee dismissed reports that [President Trump would abandon Israel](#) if the conflict in Gaza continued as “non-sense”.

Amidst the ongoing Oman-mediated US-Iran nuclear talks, Tehran reiterated its right to [enrich Uranium for energy production](#). Iran cautioned Washington that its insistence on Iran abandoning Uranium enrichment will result in failure of the negotiations. The US Special Envoy Steve Witkoff informed that he had delivered a nuclear deal proposal to Iran stressing that the US would not allow even one percent of Uranium enrichment capability in any new deal.

Other Developments

[Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Secures \\$200 Billion in New U.S.-UAE Deals and Accelerates Previously Committed \\$1.4 Trillion UAE Investment](#)

[Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Secures Historic \\$1.2 Trillion Economic Commitment in Qatar](#)

[Trump meets Syrian President, urges him to establish ties with Israel](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

The [Termez Dialogue](#) on the Interconnectedness of Central and South Asia kicked off on May 20, under the motto "Building a Common Space of Peace, Friendship and Prosperity." The high-level forum gathered approximately 200 participants from Central and South Asia, Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States, Asia, the United States, and the Middle East. 'Afghanistan' was a major point of discussion during the dialogue. Speaking at the opening session, head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), [Roza Otunbayeva emphasised](#) the importance of constructive regional engagement in addressing the challenges facing Afghanistan. "Efforts by neighbouring countries to resolve the Afghan crisis must be recognised and supported," she stated.

On [May 20](#), speaking during a high-level meeting in Tehran with Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov, Iranian President Pezeshkian emphasised that stronger ties between Tehran and Ashgabat would not only benefit both nations economically but also promote regional stability and security. Foreign Minister Meredov, who is visiting Tehran to attend the 18th meeting of the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Economic Cooperation Commission, echoed the sentiment. He said Ashgabat views Iran as a key partner in long-term economic strategy and is committed to expanding trade corridors, improving cross-border markets, and enhancing energy transit routes.

On [May 18](#), Iran and Azerbaijan launched a joint special forces exercise, weeks after Iran's president visited the neighbouring country. The "Aras-2025" exercise, running through May 21, involves Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Azerbaijani troops, the IRNA news agency reported. The drill was being held in areas of Karabakh previously disputed with Armenia before Azerbaijan regained control in September 2023. "This drill is a key step in boosting border security and confronting potential threats," said Brigadier General Vali Madani of the Guards' ground forces.

Other Developments

[Visa Applications By Indians For Turkey, Azerbaijan Drop By 42%: Report](#)

[CSTO Reviews Security Threats, Support for Afghanistan in 41st Meeting](#)

[Armenia denying existence of peace treaty provision to close Russian military base](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

The 8th meeting of the India-US Joint Working Group on Aircraft Carrier Technology Cooperation (JWGACTC) [was held](#) in India from May 13 to 16, 2025, marking a decade of collaborative engagement under the India-US Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI). Both sides acknowledged the significant progress made by the Joint Working Group in facilitating valuable information exchange on aircraft carrier technology. During the meeting, plans for future cooperation under various aspects of aircraft carrier technology were discussed. The six-member US delegation also visited Goa, where they engaged in professional interactions with the Indian Navy's aviation specialists, focusing on operational and technical aspects of aircraft carriers. The JWGACTC, established in 2012, has played a pivotal role in co-developing and co-producing advanced defence technology, particularly in naval aviation.

On May 16, the Israeli military announced it had [conducted airstrikes](#) on the Yemeni Red Sea ports of Hodeidah and as-Salif in retaliation for a renewed barrage of missiles launched by Houthi rebels toward Israel. According to a statement from the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), the strikes targeted what they described as "terrorist infrastructure" at the two ports, which Israel alleges the Houthis have used to transfer weapons. This escalation follows a recent US-brokered ceasefire, under which the Houthis had agreed to halt attacks on international shipping, prompting the US to pause its own military operations in Yemen. Despite this agreement, the Houthis declared they would continue their attacks against Israel.

Other Developments

[SLNS Samudura returned to the Port of Colombo after successfully participating in the International Maritime Defence Exhibition \(IMDEX\) Asia 2025 in Singapore](#)

[India's Permanent Representative Parvathaneni Harish highlighted that maritime security and countering terrorism are central to its national and economic interests in the Indo-Pacific](#)



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