



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



INDIA'S PROXIMITY ARCHIVES

October 15, 2025

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South Asia:

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Indian Ocean Region &

Central Asia:

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Volume III, Issue 42



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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: Dr. S. Jaishankar, India's Minister of External Affairs, conducted bilateral talks with Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi in New Delhi on October 10, 2025. Source: [X/@DrSJaishankar](https://twitter.com/DrSJaishankar)

West Asia: The US and Egypt co-hosted the Gaza Peace Summit on October 13, 2025, in Egypt. [Source: X/The White House](#)

Indian Ocean Region: Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh held a bilateral meeting with Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Mr Richard Marles in Canberra on October 09, 2025. Source: [X/@rajnathsingh](https://twitter.com/rajnathsingh)

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◇ *Peace in Progress: Long-Term Vision from Egypt-US Gaza Summit*

◇ *New Chapter in India and Mongolia's 70 years of diplomatic partnership*

South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Foreign Minister of the Afghan Taliban, is visiting India from October 9-16. Minister Muttaqi held meetings with External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval. During his opening address at bilateral discussions, Dr. Jaishankar announced the elevation of India's Technical Mission in Kabul to the [status of an Embassy](#) of India. Minister Muttaqi sought [Indian investment](#) in various sectors, including agriculture, healthcare, mining, energy, and transport. The [Joint Statement](#) issued by both sides highlighted mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. In addition, Minister Muttaqi repeated the commitment of the Afghan government to prevent any group or individual from utilising Afghan territory against India. India has committed to ongoing cooperation and the completion of unfinished projects in sectors such as healthcare, education, and humanitarian aid.

Subsequent to the 2021 Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, India has maintained a limited level of engagement with the new administration. Collaboration and diplomatic relations have steadily improved over time. The Taliban's ideological worldview and human rights approach, however, necessitate that India maintain a delicate balance of engagement.

Following the Pakistan's airstrikes in Kabul and Barmal district of Afghanistan's Paktika province on October 9, targeting suspected TTP militants, fierce border clashes between two countries erupted on October 11. According to the [Taliban Spokesperson](#) Zabiullah Mujahid 25 Pakistani border posts were captured that left 58 Pakistani soldiers dead and several others wounded. Pakistan launched [retaliatory strikes](#) after cross-border attacks hitting at least 20 Taliban positions. [Pakistan's ISPR](#) indicated that 23 Pakistani soldiers and over 200 Afghan Taliban fighters were killed in the confrontations. Pakistan's foreign ministry did not confirm the airstrikes in Kabul previously, but characterised them as lawful [counterterrorism measures](#) against militant groups imperilling its security. Tensions persist in border regions, and cross-border trade and human transit have been suspended between two countries.

Pakistan-Afghanistan relations have been undermined by fundamental issues such as the legality of the Duran Line, the undignified treatment of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, and ISI interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs. The prospect of a prompt resolution to these issues is remote, thus, the disputes between the two nations will also continue.

Tension continues to grip Pakistan in the aftermath of the October 9th [clashes](#) between security forces and followers of Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP). The TLP, under the

leadership of Saad Rizvi, its leader, called for a [march on Islamabad](#) in support of the Palestinians. On October 12th, law enforcement authorities, including the Pakistan Rangers (Punjab) and police contingents from five districts, were deployed to Muridke, where they surrounded and dismantled the TLP camp. Media reports indicate that [four fatalities](#), including a police officer, and 56 injuries resulted from the clashes. In the meantime, an [investigation](#) into money laundering has been launched by the authorities against TLP leader Saad Rizvi, who is in hiding and is thought to be suffering from gunshot wounds.

Since 2017, TLP, a Barelvi organization, has been leveraging its influence to pressure the Pakistani state into adopting its fundamentalist perspectives on matters such as blasphemy. This organization was used for political purposes by the military in the past. Increased support has enhanced the TLP's confidence, prompting it to regularly challenge the state, including threats of instigating disorder.

Other Developments

[Nepal President Holds All-Party Meeting Ahead of 2026 House Elections](#)

[Bangladesh Army's 15 officers taken into custody after International Crimes Tribunal issued arrest warrants](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [October 14](#), Indonesia President Prabowo Subianto said progress has been made toward lasting peace in Gaza though the process remains “complicated”. He was one of over 20 world leaders - and the only one from Southeast Asia - who attended the summit at Sharm el-Sheikh for talks on later phases of the Gaza peace plan. Speaking to reporters at Halim Perdanakusuma Air Base in East Jakarta, Prabowo said discussions among participating nations would now focus on the next steps of the peace process. Prabowo further described Indonesia’s participation in the summit as a reflection of its longstanding commitment to peace and Palestinian statehood.

Indonesia’s presence at the Gaza peace summit underscores its strategic ambition to elevate its global diplomatic profile while reaffirming its historical support for Palestinian statehood. With no other Southeast Asian leaders present, Indonesia is implicitly stepping into a leadership role within ASEAN on global conflict resolution, especially in Muslim-majority contexts.

On [October 12](#), the Philippines and China traded accusations on Sunday over a maritime confrontation near disputed islands in the South China Sea, further intensifying tensions in the resource-rich waterway. [The incident](#), which occurred close to the Philippine-controlled Thitu Island (locally known as Pag-asa), saw both countries blaming each other for an at-sea collision involving water cannons and coast guard vessels. According to [Manila's coast guard](#), three Philippine vessels were anchored near the island as part of a government initiative to safeguard local fishermen when Chinese ships reportedly approached and used water cannons to intimidate them. China's coast guard countered that two Philippine government vessels "illegally entered" waters near Sandy Cay, a coral reef within the northern Thitu Reefs of the Spratly Islands, resulting in a collision.

The October 12 maritime clash near Thitu Island reflects escalating geopolitical tensions in the South China Sea, where strategic competition, sovereignty disputes, and great power dynamics converge. It is also clear that both sides are using the incident to reinforce their territorial claims.

Other Developments

[US adviser on India accused of taking documents, meeting Chinese officials](#)

[Malaysia 'hopes' Trump will witness Thai-Cambodia ceasefire at ASEAN summit](#)

[Myanmar junta strike kills dozens at festival protest, say residents](#)

East Asia

by

Arshiya Chaturvedi

On October 10, [Taiwanese President William Lai announced that the country will build a dome-like air defence system, referred to as the Taiwan or T Dome](#), to protect its citizens from hostile threats. He noted this initiative to strengthen Taiwan's self-defence capabilities is a clear necessity, considering China's continued incursions into Taiwanese waters and airspace and the current US administration's stance of Taiwan taking greater responsibility for its own defence. Mr Lai also called on China to "demonstrate the responsibility befitting a major power" and refrain from using force or coercion in the Taiwan Strait. Taiwan's opposition leader Guo Jiakun, however, has criticised Lai's remarks as a distortion of facts and an attempt to mislead public opinion. The pro-China leader reiterated that Taiwan is "an inseparable part of China's territory" and accused Lai of indulging in unnecessary "warmongering".

The current Taiwanese President William Lai is known for his hardline stance on China and has, since coming to power, substantially boosted Taiwan's military spending. Heavy military investments or over-prioritisation of defence are often viewed critically in domestic politics, and Taiwan's internal political divisions towards China further complicates the issue, affecting not only domestic affairs but also regional and larger geopolitical dynamics.

On October 13, [the Global Leaders' Meeting on Women was held in Beijing, China](#), to mark the 30th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, which was also held in the Chinese capital. President Xi Jinping, in his address, emphasised the international community's shared responsibility to take more practical actions to advance women's development and put forward four proposals to accelerate their all-round development. These are strengthening global frameworks to protect women's rights; supporting women and girls in crisis-affected areas while also recognising their key role in peacebuilding and reconstruction; empowering women's development through innovation and enhancing their role in green growth and expanding women's access to quality health and education, and participation in political affairs and governance.

Chinese President also announced new initiatives in this regard, including a \$10 million donation to UN Women, \$100 million from China's Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund for women-focused projects, establish a Global Centre for Women's Capacity Building along with supporting 1,000 "small and beautiful" livelihood programs for women and girls and invite 50,000 women for training under the same. Many leaders who attended the meeting, including those of [Sri Lanka](#),

[Ghana](#), and [Mozambique](#), have commended and expressed strong support for China's efforts in this regard.

Women's Empowerment has become a critical and widely supported policy objective in today's geopolitical context, with particularly strong fervour across the Global South.

Other Development

[13 Chinese warplanes, 6 naval vessels detected near Taiwan's territory](#)

[North Korea shows off long-range missiles it claims can hit US mainland](#)

[Japan opposition in talks to challenge Sanae Takaichi after coalition collapse](#)

[Indian and Japanese governments support research partnerships, academic collaborations in various fields: Consul-General](#)

[Around 80 Koreans unaccounted for in Cambodia: foreign ministry](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On October 13, the US and Egypt co-hosted the Sharm El-Sheikh Peace Summit on Gaza, attended by President Donald Trump and several world leaders. The “Trump Declaration for enduring peace and prosperity”, signed by the US, Egypt, Qatar, and Türkiye, [ended two years of conflict](#) between Israel and Hamas, in which reportedly 68,000 Palestinians were killed. President Trump also addressed the Israeli Knesset, lauding the dawn of a ["New Middle East" marking the end of terror](#), death, and destruction, and “the beginning of a new age of hope, faith, and God”. He reaffirmed that both Israelis and Palestinians should prosper with their fundamental human rights protected, security guaranteed, and dignity upheld. Hamas released 20 [remaining Israeli hostages](#) and handed over the remains of four dead hostages. On its part, Israel released 250 Palestinian prisoners and over 1700 detainees from Gaza.

Even as a Gaza ceasefire deal was reached in Egypt, President Trump refused to directly address the creation of a Palestinian State (Two-State Solution), while Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey continued to emphasise the importance of the two-state solution for lasting peace in the Middle East. This demonstrates the US's continuing opposition to the creation of a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Major issues discussed by President Trump in his address to the Israeli Parliament included the role of international pressure in ending the Gaza conflict, [rebuilding Gaza](#), and the role of US-Israeli airstrikes on the Iranian nuclear program in the Gaza deal. Trump hailed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as a great wartime leader who should be pardoned by the President of Israel for allegations of corruption.

A ceasefire in Gaza has been widely hailed by the international community, but questions remain about the dawn of a new Middle East without addressing Palestinian rights.

Other Developments

[Visit of MOS \(KVS\) to Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, for the Sharm El-Sheikh Peace Summit \(October 13, 2025\)](#)

[UN says countries are willing to help fund Gaza's \\$70 bln reconstruction](#)

Central Asia

by

Divya Rai

Khurelsukh Ukhnaa, President of Mongolia, [undertook a state visit](#) to India from October 13 to 16, 2025, marking the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations and the 10th anniversary of Strategic Partnership between the two countries. Both countries agreed to deepen cooperation across multiple areas including defence and security, culture, energy, immigration, geology, mineral resources, humanitarian aid, and digital solutions. The visit concluded into signing of ten MoUs covering areas such as Humanitarian aid, restoration of heritage sites in Mongolia, cooperation in immigration, geology and mineral resources, promotion of Cooperatives, and sharing of digital solutions. India decided to fund a major oil refinery project in Mongolia with a US\$ 1.7 billion line of credit, which is India's largest development partnership project globally. [On defence and security cooperation](#), India announced that it will provide training to Mongolian armed forces, launch a new capacity-building program for Mongolia's border security forces, and offer free e-visas to Mongolian citizens. Both countries committed to closer ties as strategic partners, "spiritual neighbours", and "third neighbours", aiming for peace, prosperity, and regional stability in the coming decade.

Mongolian President's visit is pivotal for India to maintain and expand a reliable strategic partnership that supports regional stability, economic growth, and cultural affinity with Mongolia over the next decade. Strategically, the visit supports India's position in the Eurasian region, signals India's commitment as a trusted partner in Mongolia's development and energy security.

Russian President Vladimir Putin [arrived](#) in Tajikistan on October 8, for a three-day state visit that included participating in the second Russia–Central Asia Summit on October 9 and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Heads of State Council meeting on October 10 in Dushanbe. During this visit, Putin held bilateral talks with Tajik President Emomali Rahmon as well as separate meetings with presidents of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and other CIS member states. The [discussions focused](#) on reinforcing bilateral and regional cooperation in trade, economy, finance, industry, logistics, energy, and security sectors. Among various agreement, an interstate agreement on the legal status of representative offices of competent authorities for internal affairs and migration between Russia and Tajikistan was signed. The visit concluded with Putin departing Tajikistan on October 12, following the signing of 16 cooperation agreements and a joint declaration with Tajikistan to deepen strategic partnership and alliance.

The visit took place against a backdrop of Russia seeking to reaffirm its influence in Central Asia amid regional geopolitical flux, migration issues, economic pressures, and security challenges on its southern border. Putin emphasised that Russia and Tajikistan are "reliable allies", pledging to fulfil Moscow's obligations to Dushanbe, particularly regarding security cooperation.

The [second Russia–Central Asia Summit](#) was held on October 9, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, as part of Russian President Vladimir Putin's three-day state visit. The summit focused on

expanding cooperation across multiple areas, including trade, economy, finance, industrial projects, logistics, energy, and regional security. The leaders adopted a final communiqué and a joint action plan for 2025–2027 outlining over 50 initiatives aimed at enhancing trade, energy cooperation, and digital integration in the region. The summit was followed a day later by a broader Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Heads of State Council meeting, which further discussed military cooperation, counterterrorism, border security, and coordination among defence ministries through 2030.

This meeting was significant as it underscored Russia's efforts to reaffirm its strategic influence in Central Asia amid growing competition from China and other global actors. The summit also highlighted the desire among these countries to deepen practical cooperation – economic and security-related – within a regional partnership framework centred on Moscow.

Other Developments

[12th Summit of the Heads of State of the Organization of Turkic States \(OTS\) convened in Gabala, Azerbaijan](#)

[Japan to build central Asia's largest airport in Uzbekistan by 2028](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's recent [official visit](#) to Australia — his first, and the first by any Indian defence minister in 13 years — marked a significant leap in the Australia-India strategic partnership. During the visit, Rajnath Singh held a wide-ranging bilateral meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence of Australia, Mr Richard Marles. The talks [culminated](#) in the signing of three key agreements: an Agreement on Information Sharing, an MoU on Submarine Search and Rescue Cooperation and Terms of Reference on the establishment of Joint Staff Talks. Both sides are now increasingly looking to one another to enhance defence capabilities. The first Australia-India defence industry roundtable and launch of an annual defence ministers' dialogue was also convened during this visit. Australia and India expressed strong support for initiatives that advance closer maritime surveillance cooperation among the QUAD partners and welcomed the opportunity to observe the India-United States air exercise Cope India in 2025 for the first time, alongside Japan. Rajnath Singh invited Deputy Prime Minister Marles to visit India for the Annual Defence Ministers' Dialogue in 2026.

The visit of Rajnath Singh to Australia and the inaugural Australia-India Defence Ministers' Dialogue represent a significant and substantive milestone in bilateral defence relations. Key outcomes such as the signing of important agreements demonstrate a practical and detailed framework for collaboration, shifting their relationship from strategic intent to actionable defence cooperation between both the countries.

The Indian Navy's indigenous guided missile frigate INS Sahyadri [made a port call](#) at Busan Naval Base, Republic of Korea, as part of its ongoing maritime deployment in the Indo-Pacific. During the port call, the ship will also participate in the maiden India-RoK bilateral naval exercise, marking a significant milestone in strengthening the Special Strategic Partnership between the two nations. The [inaugural edition](#) of the India-South Korea naval bilateral exercise comprises harbour and sea phases aimed at strengthening interoperability, mutual understanding, and trust between the two navies. The harbour phase features professional exchanges, cross-deck visits, best practice sharing, sports fixtures, and cross-training sessions. The sea phase includes complex joint manoeuvres and operational drills between INS Sahyadri and ROKS Gyeongnam, designed to enhance tactical coordination and operational synergy.

As the Indo-Pacific continues to gain prominence in global geopolitics, the launch of this bilateral exercise, following extensive consultation and planning, underscores the maturing defence cooperation between India and South Korea. It also emphasised the need to build robust

maritime partnerships and reaffirms India's commitment as a responsible maritime stakeholder.

Other Developments

[Egypt's Foreign Minister Dr. Badr Abdelatty will visit India to co-chair the key strategic dialogue](#)

[Madagascar's military took charge of the Indian Ocean Island after President Andry Rajoelina was impeached](#)

[The Indian Air Force \(IAF\) carried out a joint exercise with the United Kingdom Royal Navy over the Indian Ocean Region](#)



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