



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

INDIA'S PROXIMITY ARCHIVES

October 29, 2025

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South Asia:

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Volume III, Issue 44



Delhi Policy Group

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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: Chairman of Pakistan's joint chiefs of staff committee (CJCSC) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, during his visit to Bangladesh, held a meeting with chief adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus on October 25, 2025. Source: [X/@ChiefAdviserGoB](https://twitter.com/ChiefAdviserGoB)

Southeast Asia: Timor-Leste was officially welcomed as the 11th member of ASEAN during the Opening Ceremony of the 47th ASEAN Summit, held in Kuala Lumpur, on October 26, 2025. Source: [ASEAN](https://asean.org)

West Asia: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke at the US Embassy in Jerusalem on October 24, 2025, on the implementation of the Peace Plan for Gaza. Source: [Official X Handle/Secretary Rubio](https://twitter.com/OfficialXHandle/SecretaryRubio)

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◇ <i>The US and Chinese presidents to hold talks on the sidelines of APEC 2025</i>
◇ <i>Truce on the brink: Gaza ceasefire tested by repeated violations</i>

South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Following the initial ceasefire agreement signed on October 19 between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the second round of discussions in Istanbul from October 25th to 28th did not yield a [consensus](#). The leadership of both countries [issued](#) stern warnings regarding [cross-border attacks](#), suggesting the potential for conflict escalation. Pakistan has refused to change its position, asserting that any alliance with the Taliban regime is contingent upon Kabul's tangible actions against the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Baloch militant organisations. Afghan representatives rejected Pakistan's proposal, asserting their unwillingness to accept any stipulations that would compromise national sovereignty, maintaining that they do not acknowledge the Durand Line as a national border and that the issues of TTP and Baluchistan are Pakistan's internal affairs. While trade routes between the two countries [remain closed](#), Pakistan persisted in deporting Afghan refugees.

The conflict is affecting the livelihoods in border regions, and the economic interdependence of Pakistan and Afghanistan has resulted in market implications in both states. The forced and undignified deportation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan is further heightening tensions between the respective populaces.

Pakistan is increasing its military diplomacy efforts within South Asia. General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, [Chairman of Pakistan's Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee](#) (CJCSC), met with Chief Advisor Professor Muhammad Yunus on October 26 during his visit to Bangladesh. The press release indicates that discussions encompassed diverse aspects of Bangladesh-Pakistan relations, including the increasing significance of bilateral trade, investment, and defence cooperation. Among those [present at the meeting](#) were Dr. Khalilur Rahman, Bangladesh's National Security Adviser, Lamiya Morshed, Senior Secretary and SDG Coordinator, and Imran Haider, the Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh. General Mirza [visited the Maldives](#) from Dhaka, engaging in discussions on October 27 with President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu, Defence Minister Mohamed Ghassan Maumoon, and Chief of Defence Force Major General Ibrahim Hilmy. They discussed enhancing military-to-military engagement between the two countries.

The recent visit of the Pakistani CJCSC to South Asian countries is not the only instance of such visits by military officials in the past few months. Pakistan seeks to augment its military presence in South Asia, leveraging its defence cooperation with China and enhanced relations with the United States.

The 14th [India-Bhutan Meeting](#) on Border Management and Security was conducted in Thimphu, Bhutan, from October 16-17. The Indian delegation comprised representatives from the Sashastra Seema Bal, the Land Ports Authority of India, the Department of Telecommunications, the Narcotics Control Bureau, the Survey of

India, and Customs, as well as representatives from Assam, West Bengal, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh. The Bhutanese delegation was led by the Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Both parties discussed bilateral security cooperation, border management matters, mobile signal spillover, the Integrated Check Posts' future roadmap, boundary pillar maintenance, and cross-border movement. The discussions also addressed capacity building initiatives for the Royal Bhutan Police.

Given the growing Chinese military activity in Doklam, the India-Bhutan-China border trijunction, and the security concerns in India's northeastern states stemming from Bangladesh's political instability, the joint review of the security situation conducted by India and Bhutan was essential.

Other Developments

[Hefazat-e-Islam holds rally in Chattogram, Bangladesh, demands ban on Iskcon](#)

[Pakistan, Saudi Arabia vow to deepen partnership in trade, investment](#)

[Pakistan likely to contribute troops for Gaza force](#)

[Pakistan Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir visited Jordan and Egypt](#)

[Doha signs protocol to invest \\$3bn in Pakistan](#)

[9th JEC meeting: Dhaka, Islamabad agree to strengthen further cooperation in various sectors](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared the 21st century as the “[century of India and ASEAN](#)”, while highlighting that the partnership between the two sides goes beyond trade and is deeply rooted in cultural, historical, and civilisational ties, during his virtual address at the 22nd ASEAN-India Summit in Kuala Lumpur on October 26. He [reaffirmed ASEAN's role](#) as the “main pillar” of India's Act East Policy and warmly welcomed Timor-Leste as the bloc's eleventh member. Highlighting shared geography, values, and a collective identity within the Global South, Modi noted that India and ASEAN together represent one-fourth of the world's population. He reiterated India's steadfast support for ASEAN Centrality and its Indo-Pacific vision, underscoring a commitment to inclusive regional cooperation.

Prime Minister Modi's framing of the 21st century as the “century of India and ASEAN” marks a deliberate attempt to elevate India's strategic profile in Southeast Asia by reinforcing shared civilisational narratives and aligning with ASEAN's regional vision.

The [47th Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\) Summit](#) and related summits concluded on October 28. Along with the ASEAN summit, several other related summits, such as the 28th China-ASEAN summit, the 28th ASEAN+3 summit, 20th East Asia summit, and the fifth Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) summit, were also held. Based on the theme “inclusivity and sustainability”, the 47th summit focused on strengthening the cooperation among the member states, along with their attempts to widen the areas of mutual interactions with their partners at various levels, such as ASEAN+3 and RCEP. [Speaking at the closing ceremony](#), Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia, the chair of ASEAN 2025, emphasised ASEAN centrality, saying that “we revived dialogues, built new bridges, and proved that ASEAN's machinery, when guided by patience and reason, still works.” At the ceremony, Malaysia handed over the ASEAN chairmanship for 2026 to the Philippines. On [October 26](#), Timor-Leste officially became the 11th member of ASEAN, marking the bloc's first expansion in 26 years since Cambodia joined in 1999. China pitched for greater integration among the countries in the region to defeat the growing protectionism and instability around the world during the closing ceremony on October 28.

The 47th ASEAN Summit and its related meetings reaffirmed ASEAN's strategic ambition to assert its centrality in the evolving Indo-Pacific landscape. However, the summit also exposed ASEAN's limitations in addressing contentious issues – such as China's assertiveness in the South China Sea and U.S. trade policies that have impacted regional economies. While ASEAN remains a vital convening platform, its cautious diplomacy highlights the challenge of maintaining unity without directly confronting major powers.

On the [sidelines of the meetings](#), the US announced reciprocal trade deals with Malaysia and Cambodia and framework agreements – the outlines of future trade deals – with Thailand and Vietnam. Under the deals with Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam, all four countries agreed to the same US tariff rates previously announced by the White House – 19 or 20 percent – while making a number of concessions.

While Malaysia received tariff exemptions on some of its key exports in its trade agreement, Trump's latest round of deal-making still left many larger questions unanswered.

Other Developments

[China deepens ties with ASEAN ahead of Xi-Trump talks](#)

[Pro-military party in Myanmar rallies ahead of December polls](#)

[Thailand, Cambodia sign historic peace deal, brokered by Trump, to end military conflict](#)

East Asia

by

Arshiya Chaturvedi

On October 27, Trump visited Japan as the second stop on his Asia tour and met with Japan's newly appointed Prime Minister, Sanae Takaichi. In this meeting, [the two leaders signed an agreement adopting a common policy framework for the mining and processing of critical minerals and rare earth elements](#) to enhance both countries' resilience and security of critical minerals and rare earth supply chains. Takaichi has remarked that "the US-Japan security relationship is the greatest alliance in the world, and Japan is ready to collaborate on a critical mineral supply chain, such collaboration to contribute to world peace and stability". She also asserted her commitment to realising a new golden age of the Japan-US alliance, in which both nations will become stronger and more prosperous. Mr Trump is expected to travel to South Korea next for the APEC 2025 summit, where he is set to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping.

With China significantly dominating the global critical mineral supply chain and using export controls as a strategic tool to exert pressure on its adversaries, this collaboration between the US and Japan is natural. By investing in strengthening their capacity to procure these minerals and integrate into global supply chains, they aim to diversify away from China and safeguard their strategic interests in an era defined by rapid technological advancement.

On October 28, China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), on the margins of the 47th ASEAN Summit held in Kuala Lumpur, [signed an agreement to enhance their existing free trade agreement](#). This upgraded agreement aims to further expand collaboration in areas such as infrastructure, digital and green transitions, trade facilitation, and people-to-people exchanges. ASEAN and China are already each other's largest trading partners, and their trade continues to grow, reaching USD 785 billion in the first nine months of 2025, a 9.6 per cent increase.

Amid the US tariff spree, countries around the world are seeking stable and reliable economic partners. While China and ASEAN already share a profound economic relationship, the current geopolitical uncertainty is only pushing them closer together as they work to safeguard their positions and maintain economic stability.

Other Developments

[South Korea's Gyeongju Scrambles to Host Trump, Xi and More Leaders at APEC](#)

[North Korea fires cruise missiles ahead of Donald Trump-Xi Jinping meeting in South Korea](#)

[Ahead of Trump-Xi meeting, China says bombers flew near Taiwan](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

In response to a ceasefire violation by Hamas, the Israel Defence Forces conducted an [airstrike in Gaza on October 28](#), reportedly killing 26 Palestinians. President Donald Trump maintained that the US-backed ceasefire in Gaza is not at risk and Israel has every right to defend itself if its security is threatened. Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in his remarks in Jerusalem on October 24, informed that the US is gathering inputs for a possible United Nations resolution on an international agreement to [authorise a multinational force in Gaza](#). Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu informed that Israel will only cooperate with countries that are comfortable working with the IDF as part of the International Stabilisation Force in Gaza and refused to accept [the presence of Turkish armed forces](#).

The continuing violence in Gaza illustrates the fragile nature of the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. It also demonstrates the challenges that are likely to be faced by the proposed International Stabilisation Force.

President Trump cautioned Israel that it [risked losing American support](#) if it annexed the West Bank (Judea and Samaria). He claimed to have promised Arab leaders that Israel would not be allowed to annex the West Bank and expressed the hope that the "Abraham Accords" would be extended to include Saudi Arabia.

The Israeli annexation of the West Bank would impede further expansion of the "Abraham Accords" since countries such as Saudi Arabia are only willing to consider normalisation with Israel if a Palestinian state is established.

As part of its efforts to disarm Hezbollah, Lebanon's army has steadily cleared southern [Lebanon of Hezbollah's arms caches](#). In light of this, on October 27, President Trump's Deputy Middle East Envoy, Morgan Ortagus, visited Beirut to discuss the Lebanese government's progress on the disarmament of Hezbollah.

There has been some progress in disarming Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, which borders Israel; however, the Lebanese Army is being cautious in disarming Hezbollah in other parts of the country. Beirut is seeking political consensus about disarming Hezbollah to avoid inflaming sectarian tensions.

Other Developments

[Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas names successor 'in event of a vacancy'](#)

[Maj. Gen. Yousef Maayouf Saeed Al Hallami, Commander, United Arab Emirates Land Forces Arrives in India](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [October 27](#), Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev expressed support for Azerbaijan's participation in the upcoming Central Asia-U.S. Summit in Washington, scheduled for November 6. In an exclusive comment to Azerbaijani outlet Minval Politika, Tokayev [praised](#) Azerbaijan's regional role and even called the country a "natural part of Greater Central Asia." The summit, held under the C5+1 format, traditionally includes the United States and the five Central Asian republics—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—who have all received formal invitations from President Donald Trump. While Azerbaijan's inclusion remains uncertain and no official invitation has been announced, Tokayev's endorsement signals a growing openness among Central Asian leaders to expand the framework of regional cooperation beyond its conventional boundaries.

Tokayev's remarks highlight a growing perception of Azerbaijan's integration with Central Asia, reinforcing the South Caucasus's emerging role as a strategic gateway to European markets. They also signal a broader effort to expand the concept of 'Greater Central Asia' and reshape regional boundaries.

On [October 26](#), the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) and the Embassy of Armenia in Tehran agreed to establish a joint digital platform to connect Iranian and Armenian businesses directly, aiming to expand bilateral trade and investment opportunities. During the meeting, Hamed Asgari, ICCIMA's Deputy for International Affairs, said the two nations are working toward elevating their partnership to a strategic level, with a shared goal of increasing annual trade volume from US\$ 737 million in 2024 to US\$ 1 billion in 2025, and eventually to US\$ 3 billion in the coming years. Both sides agreed to launch a joint B2B matchmaking platform, which will serve as a unified and accessible digital space for companies seeking partnerships, suppliers, or clients in either market. They also decided to develop joint protocols for issuing certificates of origin to improve transparency and prevent forgery, hold technical meetings between customs authorities to harmonise trade procedures, and organise a joint conference on the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) free trade opportunities.

Iran and Armenia's plan to launch a joint digital trade platform signals a strategic deepening of ties, reflecting Iran's bid to bypass Western sanctions through regional networks, while Armenia aims to diversify partnerships amid geopolitical tensions. The move highlights a broader geoeconomic shift toward digital infrastructure and regional interdependence.

Other Developments

[CIS, SCO to hold joint counter-terror drills in Belarus next year](#)

[On Participation in the CIS Conference on Countering Terrorism and Extremism](#)

[Rare Earth Diplomacy: Critical Minerals Set to Top Agenda at C5+1 Summit](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

Mahe', the first of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Watercrafts (ASW SWC) built by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) in Kochi, [was delivered](#) to the Indian Navy on October 23, 2025. Named after the historic port town in the Union Territory of Puducherry, 'Mahe' reflects India's rich maritime heritage and growing self-reliance in naval shipbuilding, with over 80% indigenous content. The vessel measures approximately 78 metres in length, displaces around 1,100 tonnes, and is equipped for underwater surveillance, low-intensity maritime operations, anti-submarine warfare in coastal waters, and has advanced mine-laying capabilities. Its armament includes torpedoes, multifunctional anti-submarine rockets, and advanced radar and sonar systems.

The induction of these ASW shallow watercraft is a significant enhancement to the Indian Navy's underwater warfare capabilities and maritime security in littoral zones, embodying the Government of India's vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

The US and Indian navies completed a [bilateral training exercise](#) near Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, held from October 22 to 28, 2025. This operation featured a combined detachment of maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft: the US Navy's P-8A Poseidon from Commander, Task Force 72, and the Indian Navy's P-8I. Both teams engaged in intensive anti-submarine warfare and maritime domain awareness drills designed to enhance operational interoperability and information sharing between the two navies. The exercise builds on previous joint efforts like Tiger Triumph 2025, leveraging advanced technologies, including satellite and unmanned systems, to strengthen collective maritime capabilities and reinforce theatre security.

These exercises between the US and Indian naval forces are significant for both countries amid strained ties and uncertainties regarding the Quad. Despite occasional political and trade tensions, the deepening defence cooperation in anti-submarine warfare, maritime domain awareness, and advanced technology integration underscores the pragmatic strategic alignment between the US and India in the Indo-Pacific.

Other Developments

[INS Sahyadri made a port call at Yokosuka, Japan, for the harbour phase of JAIMEX-25 \(Japan India Maritime Exercise\)](#)

[INS Sutej successfully completed a joint hydrographic survey with the Mauritius Hydrographic Service](#)



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