



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

INDIA'S PROXIMITY ARCHIVES

August 20, 2025

Authors

South Asia:

Shreyas Deshmukh

Southeast Asia:

Jayantika Rao T.V.

West Asia:

Sanket Joshi

East Asia:

Arshiya Chaturvedi

Central Asia &

Indian Ocean Region:

Divya Rai

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

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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: India's Minister of External Affairs Dr S Jaishankar held a meeting with China's Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi in New Delhi on August 18, 2025. Source: [Flickr/MEA](#)

East Asia: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi with Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa at the tenth Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Foreign Ministers' Meeting on August 15, 2025. Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China](#)

Indian Ocean Region: INS *Rana* and INS *Jyoti*, along with Sri Lankan Navy ships Gajabahu and Vijayabahu, participated in the 12th edition of the Sri Lanka-India Naval Exercise (SLINEX-25) held from August 14 to 18, 2025. Source: [X/@srilanka_navy](#)

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Watch Point

◇ *The visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to China for the SCO Summit, scheduled from August 31 to September 1*

South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

From August 18 to 19, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi [visited India](#) and co-chaired the 24th round of the Special Representatives' dialogue on the Boundary Question with India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval. He also held bilateral discussions with External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar, and called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. According to the [Indian press release](#), both parties agreed on the importance of approaching the overall bilateral relationship from a political standpoint, while seeking a just, reasonable, and mutually acceptable framework for resolving the boundary issue. In addition, they reached an agreement on forming multiple Working Groups and mechanisms to facilitate advancement on matters pertaining to border management. At the meeting of foreign ministers, both parties committed to upholding multilateralism, improving communication regarding key international and regional matters, sustaining a rules-based multilateral trading system centered on the WTO, and promoting a multipolar world that protects the interests of developing nations.

Amidst the ongoing realignment of global politics, with a focus on geo-economics and technology, historical rivals India and China, holding differing worldviews, are attempting to establish common ground for reengagement.

Vikram Misri, the Foreign Secretary of India, conducted an official visit to Nepal from August 17-18, during which he met with President Ramchandra Paudel, Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba. The purpose of the visit was to prepare for Prime Minister Oli's [upcoming visit](#) to India, tentatively scheduled for September. Discussions between the Secretaries reviewed advancements in bilateral initiatives and explored further collaborative prospects, encompassing potential outcomes for Prime Minister Oli's agenda. The Foreign Secretary also met with the Chief of Army Staff of Nepal, General Ashok Raj Sigdel, and [presented](#) defence supplies and equipment, including Light Strike Vehicles (LSVs).

The initial foreign policy choices of the Oli Government strained India-Nepal relations, but improvements began as trade and connectivity projects progressed rapidly and discussions regarding [border issues](#) gained renewed focus.

Other Developments

[Teesta project: Bangladesh seeks Tk 67 billion Chinese loan](#)

[India-Maldives bilateral trade jumps 3-fold in last 7 years](#)

[Pakistan's PM announced a new Army Rocket Force Command](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

India hosted the [10th Meeting of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement \(AITIGA\) Joint Committee](#) in New Delhi, from August 10 to 14, 2025. The meetings were co-chaired by Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, Nitin Kumar Yadav, and Deputy Secretary General (Trade), Ministry of Investment, Trade & Industry, Malaysia, Mastura Ahmad Mustafa. Delegates from all ten ASEAN Member States also participated, some virtually. The Joint Committee focused on advancing the ongoing review of AITIGA to enhance its effectiveness, accessibility, and trade facilitation capabilities. Alongside the meeting, [seven sub-committee sessions](#) were held aimed at updating the 15-year-old trade agreement.

Amid the tariff uncertainty that has impacted the world, India has given a clear signal that it aims to recalibrate its trade strategy. By strengthening regional partnerships and updating legacy agreements, India aims to diversify its economic partners to remain competitive and adaptable in a shifting global landscape.

On [August 13](#), tens of thousands of residents flooded the streets of Central Java, calling for the immediate resignation of Regent Sudewo. The protestors called for the regent, equivalent to a mayor, to step down after he announced in May an increase in local property taxes of about 250%. To manage the protests, the police used tear gas making the protest violent with protestors clashing with police and soldiers turning it into chaos. Two days later, more than a thousand kilometers away in Bone, Central Sulawesi province, many protested similar drastic increases in local property taxes. Following the days of protest, on [August 19](#), Indonesia's Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Bima Arya Sugiarto, said his ministry has issued a circular appealing to all local governments to reevaluate their policies for increased Land and Building Tax for Rural and Urban Areas (PBB-P2) rates.

The steep tax hikes are a direct consequence of Indonesian President Prabowo's reductions in local government funding, designed to allocate more resources towards his initiatives. This is likely to impose considerable strain on the public, resulting in dissatisfaction with President Prabowo and highlighting deeper vulnerabilities within Indonesia's political and economic frameworks. The ensuing unrest may compromise Indonesia's credibility as a regional power and impede President Prabowo's objective of establishing a more prominent role on the global stage.

Other Developments

[Cambodia fumes over alleged Thai copy of Angkor Wat](#)

[India-Vietnam explore bilateral cooperation in shared areas of interest](#)

[Week after China vessel tension, Australia and Canada join Philippines in South China Sea sail](#)

[3rd Meeting of the Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation between Thailand and Vietnam](#)

East Asia

by

Arshiya Chaturvedi

On August 15, in Anning, Yunnan province of China, [the tenth Lancang-Mekong Cooperation \(LMC\) Foreign Ministers' Meeting](#) was held. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and the Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa met the press and outlined the vision for an “LMC 2.0”. China’s Foreign Minister asserted that the next decade of LMC holds promising prospects, characterised by unity and cooperation, openness, green innovation, peace and tranquillity, in turn achieving win-win outcomes. Mr Yi articulated the new golden decade of LMC, where concerned countries will work together to strengthen the LMC mechanism, advance economic integration, enhance coordinated governance in areas such as agriculture, water, environment, and cross-border crimes, and foster a Lancang-Mekong community through cultural, educational, and people-to-people exchanges.

LMC underscores China's broader strategy to leverage economic integration and connectivity cooperation in Southeast Asia, a region fraught with South China Sea tensions, to secure a favourable strategic position

On August 18, [South Korea and the US launched the annual Ulchi Freedom Shield \(UFS\) exercise](#), an 11-day drill aimed at bolstering joint defence readiness against regional threats. As many as 18000 South Korean soldiers are participating in this exercise. North Korea has strongly denounced the exercise as a rehearsal for invasion and warned of exercising its ‘self-defence’ right, while Seoul and Washington emphasise that the drills are defensive in nature. Seoul has postponed some 40 field drills to September, which many perceive as an attempt to improve strained relations with Pyongyang. South Korea is also [undertaking a four-day nationwide civil defence exercise](#), starting August 20, involving about 580,000 civilians, including anti-drone and cyberattack response, along with a nationwide anti-air raid drill.

The US's and South Korea's deepening defence engagement aimed at deterring North Korea is fuelling an action-reaction cycle that escalates tensions and undermines diplomacy rather than de-escalation in the region.

Other Development

[North Korea's Kim calls for rapid nuclear buildup](#)

[Prime Minister ISHIBA attends the forum on the Economic Region of Indian Ocean-Africa](#)

[China is very patient': Donald Trump claims Xi assured him Beijing won't invade Taiwan during his presidency; US president appreciates](#)

[The First Japan-Brazil Foreign Affairs and Defence Dialogue](#)

['Very worried about China', says OpenAI CEO Sam Altman with a warning for America and the new 'China-Safe' chips policy](#)

[India clarifies 'no change in position' on Taiwan after Chinese readout attributes 'part of China' remark to Jaishankar](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

According to reports on August 18, Hamas has accepted a proposal from Egyptian and Qatari officials for a [ceasefire with Israel in Gaza](#). The proposed ceasefire would result in a 60-day halt to violence and an exchange of some of the remaining Israeli hostages. This response by Hamas came as the Israeli military plans to launch a new offensive in densely populated Gaza City. The US and Israel are currently discussing the ceasefire and hostage exchange proposal, with Israel demanding the [release of all 50 hostages held in Gaza](#).

The US and Israel's firm stance on dismantling Hamas rule in Gaza and the demand for all 50 hostages to be released indicate that a ceasefire is unlikely despite Hamas' willingness to accept a partial ceasefire.

On August 19, Syria's Foreign Minister [Asaad al-Shibani met an Israeli delegation](#) in Paris as part of the US-mediated security dialogue between Syria's new regime and Israel. The two sides discussed issues in their border region and non-interference in Syria's domestic affairs.

Syrian-Israeli talks mediated by the US suggest that Washington intends to engage in diplomatic efforts to normalise relations between Damascus and Tel Aviv, which will expand the scope of the "Abraham Accords".

Following a meeting with Iran's National Security Chief Ali Larijani, Lebanese militant group Hezbollah's leader, Naim Qassem, pledged to oppose plans to [disarm his group by the Lebanese government](#). Meanwhile, Lebanon's President Joseph Aoun vowed to disarm Hezbollah and urged Iran [not to interfere in Lebanon's internal affairs](#).

The Lebanese government's plan to disarm Hezbollah demonstrates its commitment to implementing a US proposal that would see Israel withdraw from parts of southern Lebanon and revive the country's flagging economy.

Other Developments

[Iran says it will continue talks with IAEA after curbing access](#)

[Israel is in talks to possibly resettle Palestinians from Gaza in South Sudan](#)

Central Asia

by

Divya Rai

On August 14-15, 2025, officials from Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia gathered in the resort town of Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan, [for a meeting](#) of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council. This meeting coincided with ceremonies marking the 10th anniversary of Kyrgyzstan's accession to the Moscow-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Key topics discussed included measures to promote economic integration, boost trade, and develop common markets within the union, specifically for pharmaceuticals and medical devices. The meeting also [emphasised](#) strengthening cooperation mechanisms within the EAEU, with notable participation from Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin. The council highlighted the EAEU's significant economic growth over the past decade, with trade and industrial output rising substantially, reflecting the union's role as a major economic bloc in the region. The next meeting is scheduled to take place in Minsk in late September 2025.

Kyrgyzstan's decade in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) has brought notable benefits, including easier migration and labour rights for its citizens, economic growth, and increased government revenues through re-export trade linked to Russia's sanctions. However, long-term success depends on Kyrgyzstan's deepening domestic industrial capacity, broadening the export base, and reducing overreliance on labour migration and re-export trade.

Afghanistan and Uzbekistan have [signed](#) contracts worth \$243 million for four major electricity infrastructure projects aimed at expanding power transmission and building new substations in Afghanistan. The agreements were finalised in Kabul on August 17, 2025, between Afghanistan's state-owned utility company Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) and Uzbekistan's Ministry of Energy, represented by Uzbek energy partners including Neco Energy and Uz Energy. The projects include the construction of a 500-kilovolt Surkhan-Dasht Alwan transmission line designed to carry up to 1,000 megawatts, expansion of the Arghandi substation to 800 megavolt-amperes (MVA), construction of a new Sheikh Mesri substation in Nangarhar Province with 126 MVA capacity, and extension of the 220-kilovolt Kabul-Nangarhar (Sheikh Mesri) transmission line with an 800 MW capacity. The signing ceremony was attended by high officials, including Afghan Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund and Uzbekistan's Minister of Energy Jurabek Mirzamahmudov.

The deal also underscores strong regional cooperation between the two neighbours, who have maintained close ties despite political complexities. Uzbekistan's funding and technical

support will help stabilise Afghanistan's electricity supply over the next decade; that can help ease regional tensions.

Other Developments

[Kazakhstan regards Malaysia as its gateway to Southeast Asia and the wider ASEAN region](#)

[Uzbekistan, through a presidential decree published on August 14, 2025, introduced comprehensive support measures for Palestinian women and children evacuated from Gaza late last year](#)

[The U.S.-based satellite internet provider Starlink is expected to begin operations in Uzbekistan in 2026](#)

[Putin spoke to the leaders of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan by telephone, briefing them about his talks in Alaska with U.S. President Donald Trump](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

The 12th edition of the Sri Lanka–India Naval Exercise (SLINEX-25) [successfully concluded](#) on August 18, 2025, in the western seas off Colombo. The exercise featured Indian Naval Ships INS Rana (a Guided Missile Destroyer) and INS Jyoti (a Fleet Tanker), along with Sri Lankan Navy ships SLNS Gajabahu and Vijayabahu, both Advanced Offshore Patrol Vessels. SLINEX-25 was conducted in two phases: the Harbour phase held in Colombo from August 14 to 16, followed by the Sea phase from August 17 to 18. The key objective of SLINEX is to enhance interoperability, promote maritime cooperation, and facilitate the exchange of best practices through joint multi-dimensional maritime operations. The previous edition of SLINEX was conducted from December 17 to 20, 2024, in Visakhapatnam, India.

Sri Lanka sits near major international shipping routes that are crucial for global trade and energy transportation, making it a vital partner for New Delhi's policy of MAHASAGAR. The SLINEX maritime exercise stands as a prominent example of the close engagement between India and Sri Lanka, significantly boosting cooperation in the maritime domain.

IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez at the United Nations Security Council [emphasised](#) that maritime security is a shared responsibility that requires vigilance, innovation, and strengthened cooperation among member states and international partners. He also outlined evolving threats to maritime security, including piracy and armed robbery (nearly 150 incidents reported in 2024, with hotspots in the Straits of Malacca, Singapore, Indian Ocean, and West Africa), unlawful attacks on ships in the Red Sea, cyber-attacks, drug trafficking, and fraudulent activities. Emerging technologies bring both opportunities and risks, emphasising the need for strong cybersecurity governance. He described maritime security as not just a technical issue but deeply human. To mitigate these challenges, he highlighted the need for capacity-building initiatives focused on regional cooperation and information sharing through frameworks like the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) and the Djibouti Code of Conduct and Jeddah Amendment (DCOC/JA).

Amid escalating geopolitical tensions, maritime risks have grown substantially over the years. This message underscores the critical importance of collective action and international cooperation to protect maritime security in the face of evolving and increasing threats.

Other Development

[Ikshak, the third of four Survey Vessel \(Large\) ships built at Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers \(GRSE\), was delivered to the Indian Navy](#)

[Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone \(APSEZ\) has shown interest in joining the ₹76,200 crore Vadhvan port project in Maharashtra](#)

[INS Tamal participated in a Passage Exercise \(PASSEX\) with the Italian Navy](#)



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