



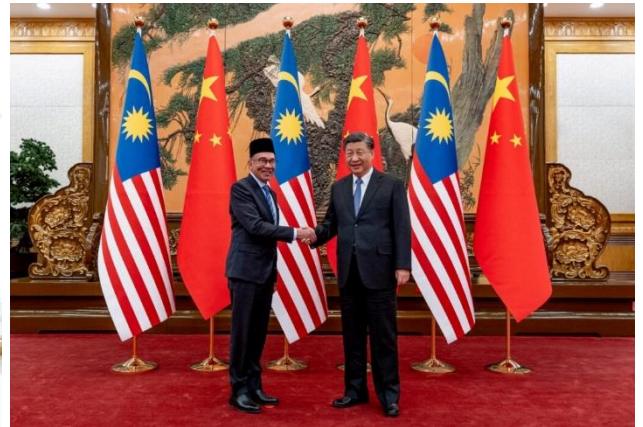
Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives

April 5, 2023



Volume I, Issue 14 | April 5, 2023

Delhi Policy Group

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

www.delhipolicygroup.org



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

India's Proximity Archives

Vol. I, Issue 14

April 5, 2023

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, Southeast Asia, West Asia, China, and Central Asia of strategic relevance to India, compiled from open-source media. The research team includes Angana Guha Roy, Ph.D., Shreyas Deshmukh, Sanket Joshi, Anshita Shukla and Jayantika Rao T.V, Research Associates. Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Sanket Joshi at sanket@dpg.org.in.

Cover Image:

South Asia: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the King of Bhutan Jigme Wangchuk in discussion on April 4, 2023. Source: [Twitter/@narendramodi](https://twitter.com/narendramodi)

Southeast Asia: Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim meets China's President Xi Jinping in Beijing on March 31, 2023. Source: [Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia Official Website](https://www.pmo.gov.my/en/prime-minister/prime-minister-meets-chinese-president-xi-jinping)

West Asia: India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar met Israeli Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana in New Delhi on April 3, 2023. Source: [Twitter/@DrSJaishankar](https://twitter.com/DrSJaishankar)

China: Chinese State Councilor and Defense Minister General Li Shangfu meets with Bangladesh Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Shaheen Iqbal in Beijing on April 1, 2023. Source: China Military

© 2023 by the Delhi Policy Group

Delhi Policy Group

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

India's Proximity Archives

Vol. I, Issue 14

April 5, 2023

Contents

South Asia

Shreyas Deshmukh 1

Southeast Asia

Anshita Shukla 3

West Asia

Sanket Joshi 5

China

Angana Guha Roy 7

Central Asia

Jayantika Rao T.V. 9

South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

The ongoing economic and political chaos in Pakistan turning into a humanitarian situation, where [food security](#) of the country is at stake. [12 people lost their](#) lives in a Karachi stampede at a Ramazan food and cash distribution center on March 31. The consumer [inflation rate](#) has touched 35.4 per cent in March. Even after [China](#) and some other countries rolled-over loans to help Pakistan maintain adequate foreign currency reserves, imports have been gravely impacted. [Cell phone manufacturing](#) and the automobile sector have come to a halt due unavailability of raw materials.

The security situation remains serious [as four policemen](#) Including DSP were killed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on March 30, while [four soldiers](#) were killed in an attack launched by militants from the Iranian side of the border of Balochistan on April 1.

During his three days visit to India from April 3-5, Bhutan King Jigme Wangchuk held discussion with [Prime Minister Modi](#) and other Indian officials. The issues related to bilateral cooperation and mutual [security concerns](#) were discussed in various meetings. India also agreed to provide support to Bhutan's [13th Five-Year Plan](#).

The Asian Development Outlook April 2023, forecasts Sri Lanka's economy to [contract further](#) in 2023 before it begins a gradual recovery in 2024. Meanwhile, India and Japan jointly expedited efforts to bring economic stability to South Asia. Maldives and Japan held the 4th Round of the [Japan-Maldives Policy Dialogue](#) on April 4 in which they discussed issues related to Economic Cooperation. On March 30, [Bangladesh Finance Ministry](#) announced that Japan will provide USD 1.27 billion for three infrastructure projects, including the construction of the new commercial port in the Matabari area.

Other Developments

[Three British men are being held in Taliban custody.](#)

[The President of Sri Lanka seeks India's help for policy reforms, gov-ernance, capacity building, digitalization, and public service delivery.](#)

[The 10th edition of India-Sri Lanka bilateral maritime exercise SLINEX-23 is scheduled at Colombo from 03 - 08 April 2023.](#)

[India, and Japan announce joint interest in co-operation with Sri Lanka for free, open Indo-Pacific.](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The [23rd ASEAN- India Joint Cooperation Committee Meeting](#) to further strengthen the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership was convened in Jakarta on March 29. The two sides discussed ways to enhance cooperation in areas such as trade and investment; maritime cooperation; transnational crimes; cybersecurity; and increased people-to-people ties. The meeting was co-chaired by the Ambassador of India to ASEAN, Jayant N Khobragade, and the Permanent Representative of Singapore to ASEAN, Kok Li Peng.

On March 31, the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors from nine ASEAN countries and representatives from six international organisations (Asian Development Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, etc.) attended the [ASEAN Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting \(AFMGM\)](#) in Bali. One of the [key areas highlighted](#) during the meeting was the need to support economic recovery, spur growth and increase financial stability in the region post the Covid-19 pandemic. The delegates discussed ways of [reducing dependency on foreign currencies](#) to "reinforce financial resilience, among others, through the use of local currency to support cross-border trade and investment in the ASEAN region", as mentioned in the joint statement.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia during [his official visit to Beijing](#) from March 29- April 1 signed 19 agreements [to boost investments](#) in green technology, digital economy and modern agriculture. During the meeting, the Malaysian Prime Minister stated his agreement to initiate negotiations with Beijing over the South China Sea Dispute. The [Prime Minister remarked](#) "China is also staking claim over the area. I said as a small country that needs oil and gas resources, we have to continue, but if the condition is that there must be negotiations, then we are ready to negotiate". This comes after heightened tensions between the two countries over the past couple of years as Malaysia alleged ["encroachment" into its waters](#) by Beijing's vessels.

The Philippines on March 3 announced the location of the [four additional military bases to be used by US troops](#) under the Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). Out of the four sites, one is a naval base in Cagayan province's Santa Ana is about 400km from Taiwan. The second one is in Balabac Island, off the southern tip of Palawan Island, near the South China

Sea. And the other two sites are an airport in Cagayan province and an army camp in the neighbouring province of Isabela. Beijing has already registered displeasure against the expansions of the Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) in February 2023.

Other Developments

[Myanmar military's attempt to co-opt Suu Kyi-led party fails](#)

[Myanmar resistance urges Taiwan, Japan to reject 'sham polls'](#)

[Cambodia reveals air defense plans near China-funded naval base](#)

[U.K. accepted as 12th member of CPTPP trade bloc](#)

[Indonesia, Russia sign extradition treaty to combat crime](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar met a Israeli Knesset (Parliament) delegation led by Speaker Amir Ohana in New Delhi on April 3. The two leaders discussed strengthening India-Israel relations, including cooperation in the 'I2U2' framework in areas such as connectivity, renewables, food security, start-ups, tourism, and culture. Israel's former Ambassador to India, Dr. Ron Malka, has been appointed the [Chairman of Haifa Port](#), which is owned by a consortium of India's 'Adani Ports' and Israel's 'Gadot Group'.

Oil prices have surged over USD 80 per barrel as OPEC+ has decided to [cut crude production](#) by another 1.16 million barrels per day beginning May 2023. Expressing [concerns over the OPEC+ decision](#), US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen warned that it is an "unconstructive act" that will add uncertainty to the global growth outlook. Meanwhile, boosting Yuan internalisation, China conducted its first [Yuan-settled liquefied natural gas \(LNG\) trade](#) through the Shanghai Petroleum and Natural Gas Exchange, importing about 65,000 tonnes of LNG from UAE.

US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Mark Milley, speaking before the House Armed Services Committee reiterated Washington's concerns over the deepening of partnership between [China, Russia, and Iran](#). Adding, "Even though the three countries do not constitute a true full alliance, they are moving closer together and it is going to be problematic for many years to come".

Amidst this, Saudi Arabia has agreed to join the 'Shanghai Cooperation Organisation' (SCO) as a "dialogue partner". Continuing China-mediated rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has reportedly accepted Saudi King Salman's [invitation to visit the Kingdom](#).

Other Developments

[India slams OIC for its 'anti-India' agenda](#)

[US reportedly discusses possible interim Iran nuclear deal with Israel, other allies](#)

[UAE President receives phone call from Israel's Prime Minister](#)

[Egypt, Syria in advanced talks to restore diplomatic relations](#)

[Jordan's King Abdullah: Muslims have duty to protect Islamic, Christian holy sites from Israeli persecution](#)

China

by

Angana Guha Roy

In a highly symbolic meeting US House Speaker [Kevin Mc Carthy](#) met Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen prompting outrage from China. Reacting to President Tsai Ing-wen's stopover visit Foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said "China is strongly opposed to the US arranging for Tsai Ing-wen to transit through its territory, and is strongly opposed to the meeting between House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, the third-ranking US official, and Tsai Ing-wen. It seriously violates the One-China principle and the three China-US joint communiques, and seriously undermines China's sovereignty and territorial integrity".

China has urged the World Trade Organization to scrutinise US led technology export restrictions aimed at curbing its ability to make advanced chips. The move comes after Japan and Netherlands has decided to limit [chip exports](#) in lines with curbs by Washington. China has accused the U.S. of being a "tech hegemony".

In its latest attempt to lay claim to areas inside Indian territory, China's Civil Affairs Ministry released the standardised names of 11 places in Arunachal Pradesh, which it calls "Zangnan, the southern part of Tibet." This was the third time China has unilaterally renamed places in Arunachal Pradesh – six were renamed in April 2017 and 15 more in December 2021. Responding to the provocation, External Affairs ministry spokesperson [Arindam Bagchi](#) said: "We have seen such reports. This is not the first time China has made such an attempt. We reject this outright."

Officials from [Nepal and China](#) agreed to resume two-way trade via a key land border point from April 1. The decision was made during the first meeting of the Nepal-China Coordination Mechanism on Border Trade and Cooperation, on March. 31. The discussion focused on resuming the cross border trade and people-to-people movement at optimum level and exploring new avenues of cooperation in border trade and cooperation.

Chinese State Councilor and Defense Minister General Li Shangfu held talks with Bangladesh Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Shaheen Iqbal in Beijing on April 1. General Li noted that China is ready to work with [Bangladesh](#) to further expand new areas of exchanges and foster new highlights of cooperation. Admiral M Shaheen Iqbal said that Bangladesh firmly adheres to

the one-China principle and is firmly committed to consolidating and developing Bangladesh-China relations.

Other developments

[All eyes on border talks between Bhutan, China as King begins India visit](#)

[Two Indian journalists barred from returning to China amid tensions](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

The agenda for the [18th Meeting of the Security Council Secretaries of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation](#) (SCO) member states on March 29 included stability and security in the region, countering terrorist financing, use of new technologies for terrorist purposes and transnational organised crimes. [Indian NSA Ajit Doval](#) urged member countries to “respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity” and seek “no unilateral military superiority in neighbouring countries”.

On April 3, [the first India-Central Asia Culture Ministers' Meeting](#) was hosted by the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Development of North Eastern region, G. Krishan Reddy, virtually. Minister G. Krishan Reddy called for “acknowledging the mutual historical, traditional and ancient links between India and the Central Asian countries”. At the end of the meeting, India proposed a Joint Statement to which the participants agreed to convey their consent at the earliest to acknowledge the forum and its continuance at regular intervals.

On the same day, [the 20th Session of Culture Ministers of the SCO Member States](#) was held, wherein member states attended the meeting virtually. The Culture Ministers of the SCO member states expressed their views on enhancing cooperation in the field of culture within the SCO Framework in the purview of the Agreement between the governments of the SCO member states on cooperation. Minister of Culture of Kyrgyzstan, Altynbek Maksutov, expressed in his speech that cultural cooperation creates a fundamental basis for further development and strengthening mutual understanding. The member states signed the Protocol and noted the role of joint activities in the sphere of culture and art as a platform for expanding intercultural exchanges and deepening mutual understanding.

On April 4, [Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Vepa Hajiyeu](#) met with the Deputy Director of the Policy Analysis and Public Relations Division of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Fedor Klimchuk and Deputy Head of the Section for Co-financing and Partnership Igor Kondratyev. During the meeting, the parties discussed implementing national, regional and global UNODC programs to combat drug trafficking. Both sides noted the successful joint holding of the 55th Session of the Sub-commission on Illicit Drug Trafficking and Related Matters in the Near and

Middle East in Ashgabat. The parties also discussed the results of the 66th Session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs held in Vienna on March 13-17, 2023.

Other Developments

[President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov receives acting Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan](#)

[Kyrgyzstan to buy electricity from Russia](#)

[Kazakhstan to Cut Oil Production Following Latest OPEC Agreement](#)

[Israeli Foreign Minister plans to visit Turkmenistan for inauguration of the Embassy](#)



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

www.delhipolicygroup.org