



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## India's Proximity Archives

May 10, 2023



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Delhi Policy Group  
Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003  
[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://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, 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](mailto:sanket@dpg.org.in).

### Cover Image:

**South Asia:** *The fifth China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue was held in Islamabad on May 6, 2023. Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC](#)*

**Southeast Asia:** *Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr. Kao Kim Hourn at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia on May 9, 2023. (Source: [ASEAN News](#))*

**West Asia:** *India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar met Israel's Foreign Minister Eli Cohen in New Delhi on May 9, 2023. Source: [Twitter/@DrSJaishankar](#)*

**China:** *Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang (left) and German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock attend a joint press conference in Berlin, Germany on May 9, 2023. Source: [Global Times](#)*

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## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Protests erupted across [Pakistan](#) following the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan on May 9. The National Accountability Bureau took him into custody under corruption charges. Imran's recent critical remarks against military leadership could be an underlying reason behind the arrest. Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf workers stormed the premises of Army GHQ in Islamabad and the Lahore Corps Commander's residence. This event may lead to political chaos in the country. Mobile and internet services are suspended across the country.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari [visited](#) India on May 4-5 to attend the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers. There was no bilateral engagement between Pakistan and India on the side-line of the summit.

On May 6, the fifth [China-Afghanistan-Pakistan](#) Foreign Ministers' Dialogue was held in Islamabad. In the meeting, Foreign Ministers adopted the 'List of China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Practical Cooperation Projects' and further agreed to 'extend the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to Afghanistan'. On the side-line, the fourth round of the China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' [Strategic Dialogue](#) was held in which China expressed its intentions to deepen "cooperation with Pakistan in security capacity building and security system... (but expected) Pakistan to continuously take the strictest measures to ensure the security and safety of Chinese nationals, projects and institutions in Pakistan".

After a month-long assessment, the [UN has decided](#) to continue its operations in Afghanistan without its female staff. The [US has criticized](#) the UN's position and demanded a 'decisive' response to the Taliban regime.

Bangladesh and Russia on May 5 [signed a protocol](#) for the procurement of nuclear fuel for the Rooppur nuclear power plant. South Korea has agreed to provide USD 3 billion in [concessional loans](#) to Bangladesh over the next five years. The loan is being given under the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) for 2023-2027.

## Other Developments

[Nepal's Rastriya Swatantra Party, on May 5, decided to withdraw support to the government led by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal.](#)

[Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserves fell below USD 30 billion for the first time in seven years a concerning sign for the country's economy.](#)

[The 21st meeting of the Bangladesh-India Joint Steering Committee on Cooperation in the Power Sector was held at Khulna, Bangladesh on May 4.](#)

[India has decided to extend the \\$1 billion credit line for Sri Lanka.](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The Inaugural [ASEAN India Maritime Exercise \(AIME-2023\)](#) concluded on May 8 in the South China Sea. It was divided into two phases- the harbour phase from May 2- 4 and the sea phase from May 7- 8, 2023. The exercise witnessed the participation of INS Delhi, India's first indigenously built guided missile destroyer and INS Satpura, an indigenously built guided missile stealth frigate from the Indian Navy. Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei participated alongside India in the sea phase of the exercise.

Leading up to the 42<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Summit, the [ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting](#) was held in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia on May 9. The meeting discussed the recent developments in the region with a special focus on Myanmar. Indonesia's [Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi](#) remarked "We cannot imagine what would happen if the region does not have ASEAN. Nevertheless, we cannot stop here. We should treat our achievements as valuable assets to build a stronger and more relevant ASEAN". The 42nd ASEAN Summit 2023 officially commenced on May 8 with the [ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting \(SOM\)](#).

During his transit through Singapore, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio met Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on [May 5](#). The two leaders discussed areas of mutual interest like the economy, digitalisation, energy, and sustainability to deepen cooperation. PM Kishida stated, "we want to [strengthen security and defence cooperation](#)", during the meeting. Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported progress in negotiations on a deal that would allow the transfer of defence equipment and technology between Singapore and Japan.

On May 3, the Pentagon released a factsheet on '[U.S.-Philippines Bilateral Défense Guidelines](#)', post Philippines President Marcos meeting with US President Biden. The document covers five key objectives of the bilateral partnership- modernise defence capabilities, deepen interoperability, enhance bilateral planning and information sharing, combat transnational and non-conventional threats and contribute to global and regional peace and security. The goal is to strengthen US-Philippine "combined deterrence in an evolving security environment".

## Recent Developments

[Indonesia has organised over 60 engagements on the Myanmar crisis: Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi](#)

[US firm plans to build small nuclear power plants in the Philippines](#)

[Joint Philippines-US patrols in South China Sea may begin by third quarter: Envoy](#)

[Indonesia's Jokowi urges dialogue for Myanmar crisis ahead of Asean Summit](#)

## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

India's National Security Advisor, [Ajit Doval](#), met Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Mohammed bin Salman, US NSA Jake Sullivan, and UAE's NSA Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan on May 8. Their discussions focused on how to strengthen ties between their countries, including a US plan to build a [railway network](#) linking Gulf countries to India via shipping lanes.

On May 9, India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar met his Israeli counterpart [Eli Cohen](#) in New Delhi. Both leaders noted a forward momentum in the strategic partnership, particularly in three key areas: agriculture, water, defence, and security.

In April 2023, India's crude oil imports from OPEC fell to an all-time low of 46 percent due to a significant increase in its purchase of [Russian crude oil](#).

In a major regional development, after a decade-long suspension, Syria has been readmitted to the [Arab League](#). Emphasising the necessity of building bridges to ensure regional prosperity and stability, UAE and Saudi Arabia welcomed Syria's readmission as "a positive step". Qatar, on the other hand, supported Syria's return but refused to normalise relations with Damascus. The US also opposed Syria's return to the Arab League.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi hailed "Syrian resistance against the Axis of Evil led by the Zionist regime (Israel) and the US" and described his state visit to Damascus as [Tehran's "strategic victory"](#) in regional affairs.

On May 9, in response to a barrage of rocket attacks, Israel launched '[Operation Shield and Arrow](#)' and conducted air strikes in Gaza killing three senior operatives of the militant group Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). As PIJ and Hamas warned of retaliation, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stressed that Tel Aviv was ["ready for any possibility"](#).



## Other Developments

[India-UAE trade: DPIIT Secretary in talks with ADIA, Mubadala for investments](#)

[Arab trains to carry Indian goods to Israeli port, says Foreign Minister Eli Cohen](#)

[Biden advisers brief Israel's Netanyahu on Saudi talks](#)

[Iran successfully tests home-made rocket with thermobaric warhead](#)

[Kuwait to join SCO as 'dialogue partner'](#)

## China

by

Angana Guha Roy

Chinese Foreign Minister [Qin Gang met the US ambassador in Beijing Nicholas Burns](#) on May 8. "The top priority is to stabilize Sino-U.S. relations, avoid a downward spiral and prevent any accidents between China and the United States," Qin said. Amb. Burns stressed that they "discussed challenges in the U.S.-China relationship and the necessity of stabilizing ties and expanding high-level communication.

During a joint press conference with German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock in Berlin on May 9, [China's foreign minister Qin Gang condemned EU proposals](#) to impose sanctions on Chinese companies for supporting Russia's war in Ukraine, vowing to react "strictly and firmly" to defend its businesses. [EU's new sanctions list includes](#) seven Chinese companies accused of supplying Russia with equipment that can be used in weapons. Among them are two companies from mainland China (3HC Semiconductors and King-Pai Technology) and two from Hong Kong (Sinno Electronics and Sigma Technology). The European Commission says these companies are helping Russia circumvent Western sanctions and continue its war against Ukraine.

China expelled a Canadian diplomat in Shanghai on May 9, a day after [Canada announced it would expel a Chinese diplomat](#) over allegations that he was involved in efforts to intimidate a Canadian politician. In a statement China's Foreign Ministry said, it strongly condemned the expulsion of Toronto-based diplomat Zhao Wei, and as "reciprocal countermeasure," would declare Jennifer Lynn Lalonde, a consul of the Consulate General of Canada in Shanghai, persona non grata. [Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said](#), Canada will not be intimidated by China following tit-for-tat diplomatic expulsions by Ottawa and Beijing.

[China attended as an observer](#) the first meeting of Sri Lanka's creditor nations on May 8. Japan, which initiated the launch together with India and France, invited all bilateral creditors including China.

Bangladesh commemorated [Doppa Day on May 5](#) and held protests and demonstrated against the persecution of Uyghur Muslims by the Chinese government. Protestors condemned China for torturing the Uyghur Muslims.

## Other Developments

[China's NEW 'Look South Policy' Isolates India In Its Own Backyard As PLA Looks To Dominate 'World's Largest' Bay](#)

[As China builds military ties across Southeast Asia, one factor stands in the way](#)

## Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On May 5, [the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation \(SCO\) member countries](#) convened in Goa. At the meeting, the foreign ministers delved into regional and global issues, and reviewed preparations for the impending SCO Council of Heads Summit scheduled for July 4-5. Kazakh Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs [Murat Nurtleu strongly emphasised](#) that “the SCO should find ways to adapt to the rapidly evolving global situation by working together in a coordinated manner”.

In addition, the meeting attendees reached an agreement to enhance the organisation's performance. They reviewed the [proposed New Delhi Declaration](#), which is to be approved by the Heads of State.

The [recent gathering at Red Square on May 9](#) to mark the end of World War II in Europe in 1945 was attended by leaders from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Belarus. Despite only the [leader of Tajikistan being present in 2021](#), it is clear that Russia still holds significant influence in the Central Asian region as all five former Soviet Union countries were represented in 2023. Ukrainian analysts suspect that there may have been coercion or promises made to ensure the participation of the Central Asian countries.

On the sidelines of the Victory Day Parade 2023, Russian President Vladimir Putin held a bilateral meeting with [Kyrgyzstan's President Sadyr Japarov](#) and [Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev](#) on May 8 separately. After the meeting with President Japarov, the two leaders adopted a joint statement on “deepening relations of strategic partnership and alliance”.

In an emphasis of loyalty to Russia, [President Sadyr Japarov signed orders](#) to help facilitate the legal stay of citizens of Kyrgyzstan in Russia. Therefore, the General Consulates of Kyrgyzstan will open in St. Petersburg and Kazan in Russia.

On May 8, the Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson [Hua Chunying announced](#) that the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will conduct state affairs with China from May 16-20. It was also

revealed that Chinese President [Xi Jinping will chair](#) the two-day China-Central Asia Summit on May 18 -19.

## **Other Developments**

[Tajikistan and Morocco hold Political Consultations](#)

[Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan Ink Strategic Documents at Bilateral Intergovernmental Commission](#)

[Tajiki Prime Minister and Qatari Minister of State for Foreign Affairs held Political Consultations](#)

[President of Turkmenistan Pays Working Visit to the UK](#)



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