



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## India's Proximity Archives

### June 7, 2023



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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:** Delegation Level Talks led by Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Nepal, Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda,' at New Delhi on June 1, 2023. Source: [MEA Flickr](#)

**Southeast Asia:** Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese with Vietnam's Prime Minister Phạm Minh Chính during his visit to Hanoi on June 4, 2023. (Source: [Anthony Albanese/Official Twitter](#))

**China:** President Ranil Wickremesinghe received a courtesy call by Foreign Affairs Vice Minister of People's Republic of China Sun Weidong on May 30, 2023. Source: [Daily FT](#)

**Central Asia:** President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov welcomed the President of the European Council Charles Michel for the second regional high-level meeting to Cholpon-Ata in Kyrgyzstan. Source: [European Council](#)

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## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Prime Minister of Nepal Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' [visited India](#) from May 31 to June 3, during which he held bilateral discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other Indian officials. The visit concluded with the signing of six project-specific [bilateral agreements](#) including the inauguration of railway lines, new check-posts, petroleum pipeline, and electricity transmission line. Meanwhile, PM Prachanda said that his India visit has [restored trust](#) with Indian leadership at the political level.

According to the [report published](#) on May 31, the Qatari prime minister held secret talks with the supreme leader of the Taliban on May 12 in Kandahar, Afghanistan. The meeting was focused on issues that are creating tensions between the Taliban and the international community.

The tensions over water rights of Helmand River escalated to a [deadly clash](#) between Iranian guards and the Taliban fighters on May 27, Iran says it has made progress in negotiations and the issue will be settled soon. The Taliban is planning to [relocate the refugees](#) settled alongside the Durand Line to other provinces in Afghanistan, to assure Pakistan that refugees are not involved in attacks against the Pakistani government.

The terrorist organisation Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan has reached out to the Pakistan government to [resume peace talks](#), but the government has declined the offer and instead urged the militants to surrender.

Indian Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan visited Maldives on June 3-4. During the visit, both sides signed MoUs to implement [ten additional high-impact projects](#) in the Maldives with Indian assistance. Meanwhile, the main-ruling Maldivian Democratic Party's Parliamentary Group on June 6, decided to move a [no-confidence motion](#) against Parliament Speaker and Party President Mohamed Nasheed. The motion was moved due to Nasheed's alleged non-compliance to Parliament rules.

## Other Developments

[General Manoj Pande, the Chief of the Army Staff \(COAS\) of India visited Bangladesh on June 5-6.](#)

[Pakistan has passed a special order to allow barter trade with Afghanistan, Iran, and Russia for certain goods.](#)

[80 girls were poisoned and hospitalised in two separate attacks at their primary schools in northern Afghanistan on June 3-4.](#)

[The United Nations and humanitarian agencies have revised the budget for Afghanistan's aid plan for 2023 to \\$3.2 billion, down from \\$4.6 billion earlier in the year.](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, delivered remarks at the [20th Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore](#) for a special panel on "Balancing Asia-Pacific Minilateralism and ASEAN Centrality" on June 3. He underscored the importance of ASEAN Centrality in the regional architecture and the inclusive nature of cooperation under the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

The [3rd India-Vietnam Maritime Security Dialogue](#) was held on May 31 in New Delhi. The Indian delegation was headed by Ms. Muanpuii Saiawi, Joint Secretary (Disarmament and International Security Affairs), Ministry of External Affairs, and the Vietnamese delegation by Ambassador Trinh Duc Hai, Vice Chairman, National Boundary Commission. The [two sides discussed](#) ways to sustain a secure maritime environment conducive to inclusive growth and prospects for strengthening international and regional platforms for comprehensive maritime security.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese made [an official visit to Hanoi](#) on June 4, the first official visit by an Australian Prime Minister in four years to Vietnam. During the visit, the two countries signed multiple agreements - to share intelligence on money laundering, establish a regular trade ministers' meeting and a [\\$105 million pledge](#) by Australia to help Vietnam decarbonise. PM Anthony Albanese signalled the readiness to "elevate the Australia-Vietnam relationship to [a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership](#)".

Indonesia is hosting the [2023 Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo](#) in the Makassar Strait from June 5-8. In the official statement by the Indonesian Navy, the Komodo drills were characterised as a "non-war" exercise aimed at "strengthening relationships between the navies" of 36 countries. Officials said there would be 17 foreign vessels involved in the drills, which will focus on non-military operations with key allies. India sent [Indian Naval Ship Satpura](#) to Makassar on June 5 to participate in the exercise.

The Philippines, United States and Japan commenced the [first-ever joint naval drills](#) on June 1 off the Bataan province of the Philippines. Vice Admiral Rolando Lizaro Punzalan Jr. of the Philippine Coast Guard stated that "improved maritime cooperation and understanding between the three coast guards of the Philippines, Japan and the United States is the goal of this undertaking".

## Other Developments

[Indonesia-Malaysia QR code payments get started under the ASEAN system](#)

[UN special envoy for Myanmar Noeleen Heyzer to step down: UN chief's spokesman](#)

[Marcos Jr. brings back Gilberto Teodoro as defense chief](#)

[Shangri-La Dialogue: Southeast Asian leaders 'acutely concerned' about US-China rivalry](#)

[Philippines to step up ties with U.S.-Japan-Australia coalition](#)

## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On June 2, India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, met with the Foreign Ministers of [Saudi Arabia](#), the [United Arab Emirates](#), and Iran on the sidelines of the 'Friends of BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting' in Cape Town, South Africa. The strategic partnership between India and the Gulf countries continues to grow.

EAM Dr. Jaishankar, in his address at the Friends of BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting stressed that "[BRICS is no longer an alternative](#)", rather, it is an "established feature of the global landscape". He also discussed strong support for UNSC reforms, BRICS as an expression of multipolarity, creating resilient and reliable supply chains, and building a fairer, open, and inclusive international architecture.

Amidst strained [US-Saudi Arabia relations](#), on June 6, Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, met Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman in Jeddah. The two leaders emphasised a "shared commitment to advance stability, security, and prosperity across the Middle East and beyond". Reportedly, Secretary Blinken also discussed expanding the 'Abraham Accords' including the possibility of Saudi Arabia normalising relations with Israel.

The United Arab Emirates has withdrawn its participation from the 38-nation [Combined Maritime Forces](#) tasked with securing the Gulf waterways.

During the IDF's large-scale, two-week exercise 'Firm Hand', the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, chaired a [simulated security cabinet meeting](#) at the IDF's main operational command bunker in Tel Aviv. PM Netanyahu expressed confidence in Israel's ability to deal with any threat on its own and reiterated Tel Aviv's commitment to [acting against Iran's nuclear program](#). Amidst continuing tensions between Israel and Iran, Tehran reportedly unveiled a homegrown [hypersonic missile named 'Fattah'](#).



## Other Developments

[Saudi Arabia cuts oil output by 1 million barrels per day to boost sagging prices](#)

[Peace in Gulf region 'vital' says China as Iran, Saudi, UAE mull naval alliance](#)

[Rebuffing Israel, IAEA's director denies caving to Iran on closed probes](#)

[Israel Energy Minister opposes Saudi civilian nuclear program as normalisation condition](#)

[Indian envoy backs UAE bid to make COP28 a summit of action](#)

## China

by

Angana Guha Roy

India and China held the [27th Meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs \(WMCC\)](#) on May 31 wherein both sides discussed proposals for disengagement in the remaining friction points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Both sides also agreed to hold the 19th round of high-level military talks at an early date to achieve the objective of restoration of peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

India has prepared a list of sectors where it has advised public sector undertakings (PSUs) and other government bodies [to refrain from using Chinese technology even if it comes at a lower cost](#) compared to other service providers. Technologies identified as sensitive where organisations are advised to avoid procurement from China include 3D printing, technology used by cranes at ports like SCADA systems, technology used for data streaming including broadcasting, biotechnologies, and etc.

China's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs [Sun Weidong has assured Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe](#) of "steadfast support" to overcome the unprecedented economic crisis the island nation is going through. Mr. Weidong expressed keen interest in exploring opportunities to strengthen the bilateral relations while reiterating China's steadfast support for Sri Lanka in its ongoing economic recovery.

Secretary of State [Antony Blinken plans to visit China](#) in the coming weeks for talks with top officials, possibly including President Xi Jinping to resume high-level communication. The exact timing for Blinken's visit is still undecided.

Daniel Kritenbrink, assistant US secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and Sarah Beran, National Security Council senior director for China, met with Chinese diplomats Ma Zhaoxu and Yang Tao to hold "candid and productive discussions" in Beijing on June 5. The discussions were part of [ongoing efforts to maintain open lines of communication](#) and build on recent high-level diplomacy between the two countries.

## Other Developments

[Letter from President Xi: Bangladeshi girl Alifa Chin hopes to become envoy for China-Bangladesh friendship](#)

[India positive, but to tread cautiously on Nepal's request for new routes to save its airports built by China](#)

## Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On June 3, the [President of Kyrgyzstan](#), Sadyr Japarov, said "Kyrgyzstan is ready to work in hand with the European Union on shared problems, encourage dialogue and find lasting solutions". President Japarov and the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, [issued a joint statement](#) in which they also confirmed their firm commitment to the UN Charter and its "principles of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries".

The highly anticipated [Astana International Forum](#) (AIF) is set to begin on June 8. The event's theme is Tackling Challenges Through Dialogue: Towards Cooperation, Development, and Progress. The forum's vision is to promote global cooperation and peace by discussing issues currently high on the international agenda, including climate change and advancing security and development. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said AIF is meant to "[respond to global challenges](#)".

The first Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, Kairat Umarov attended [the BRICS Foreign Ministers' meeting](#) in Cape Town, South Africa, on June 2. Addressing the participants, Minister Kairat Umarov expressed that Kazakhstan seeks to join BRICS and strengthen its economic cooperation with member countries. Minister Kairat Umarov argued that BRICS "has become an effective international platform for addressing acute contemporary issues, demonstrating collaboration between emerging economies". Minister Umarov emphasises the importance of "collective efforts in solving urgent problems, pointing to the synergy of the goals, objectives and principles of the BRICS, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), based on international law and the United Nations Charter.

On May 31, Iran and Turkmenistan signed [five documents on enhancing cooperation](#) in transportation, the building of international corridors, energy and electricity exchanges, agriculture, education and investment. During the press conference, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said that the signing of these documents was a manifestation of the two countries' determination and will to expand bilateral political, economic and cultural relations.

The [United States is negotiating a deal with Turkmenistan](#) to help the country curb the colossal methane leak. Through this deal, the US official seeks to prevent some leaks from Turkmenistan's oil and gas industry by the start of the UN'S CoP28 Climate Summit, which is scheduled for November this year.

### Other Developments

[Tajikistan: Dual Citizenship Holders fear Russian Army Call-Up](#)

[Emir of State of Qatar to Attend Astana International Forum on June 8](#)

[Turkmenistan establishes Commission on reducing methane emissions](#)

[Uzbek President seeks re-election in July](#)

[President of Turkmenistan holds talks with OSCE Secretary General](#)



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