



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## India's Proximity Archives

June 14, 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:

**Southeast Asia:** External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar met Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Education & Foreign Affairs of Singapore in Varanasi on June 12. (Source: [Dr. S Jaishankar/Official Twitter](#))

**West Asia:** India's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, co-chaired the 1st Joint Committee Meeting of India-UAE CEPA along with his Emirati counterpart Dr. Thani Al Zeyoudi, June 12, 2023. Source: [Twitter/@PiyushGoyal](#) National

**China:** Assembly Chairman Ganesh Prasad Timilsina met Zhao Leji, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China on June 13. Source: [Kathmandu Post](#)

**Central Asia:** President of Kazakhstan, Kassym -Jomart Tokayev addressed the Astana International Forum participants at the plenary session on June 8. Source: [President of the Republic of Kazakhstan \(Official\)](#)

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## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

According to a UNSC Taliban Sanctions Committee [report](#) published on June 5, the link between the Taliban and al-Qaeda remains “strong and symbiotic” and they are “rebuilding operational capability”, threatening the stability and security of the region. The report also highlighted differences within the Taliban ranks over economic and ideological issues. The Taliban has [termed the report](#) as “baseless and biased”.

Pakistan Finance Minister Ishaq Dar presented the [annual Budget](#) on June 9. The government hopes to achieve a 28 percent higher [revenue target](#) for the next fiscal year based on projected GDP growth of 3.5 percent and average inflation of 21 percent. The [defence budget](#) increased 13 percent than last year. Meanwhile, Pakistan paid off a USD 1 billion Chinese commercial loan on June 12 bringing its gross official currency reserves below USD 3 billion.

On June 7, China, Pakistan, and Iran held the first [trilateral consultation](#) on counter-terrorism and security at the director-general level in Beijing. The issues related to regional counter-terrorism situations and joint efforts to crack down on cross-border terrorists were discussed during the meeting.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr. AK Abdul Momen [visited India](#) on June 12 to attend “The G20 Development Ministers' Meeting (G20 DMM) where he emphasised the importance of multilateralism and called for support from developed countries on means of implementation, financing, and capacity-building. On the sideline, he [held talks](#) with his Indian counterpart Dr S Jaishankar.

### Other Developments

[An explosion inside a mosque in northern Afghanistan on June 8 killed at least 11 people.](#)

[Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar said that the focus right now in Afghanistan is more on helping Afghan people, less political.](#)

[BIMSTEC Business Advisory Council Proposed, Bangladesh hold next Chair](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The External Affairs Minister of India, [Dr. S. Jaishankar met Dr. Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman](#), Minister in the Prime Minister's Office of Singapore, on the sidelines of the G20 Development Ministers' Meeting on June 12. Dr. Jaishankar applauded Singapore's ratification of the [International Solar Alliance](#), calling it a "big step". The two leaders discussed shared G20 priorities.

The [2nd ASEAN-UK Senior Officials' Meeting \(AUKSOM\)](#) was convened in Brunei Darussalam on June 8. The senior officials reviewed cooperation between the two sides and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen ASEAN-UK Dialogue Partnership. The meeting discussed ways to deepen the ASEAN-UK cooperation in areas such as maritime cooperation; transnational crime; cyber security; trade and investment; micro, small and medium Enterprises (MSMEs); etc.

Indonesian President Jokowi Widodo culminated his [two-day official visit](#) to Malaysia on June 8. During his visit, the two sides signed six bilateral instruments relating to border crossings, trade, cooperation in investment promotions, mutual recognition of halal certification for domestic products, as well as two treaties relating to the delimitation of territorial seas. The sides pledged to work closely to address the ["highly detrimental discriminatory measures"](#) on palm oil products due to the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) ratification.

The Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen attended the ground-breaking ceremony of the [China-funded highway to Vietnam](#) border on June 7. The expressway links Cambodia's capital to the Vietnamese border town of Bavet. It is projected to take 48 months to construct at a [cost of \\$1.35 billion](#), with financial assistance from China. The Chinese state-owned China Road and Bridge Corp will gain operating rights of the expressway for 50 years upon its completion. The expressway is one of the many Chinese funded infrastructure projects propping up in Cambodia.

## Other Developments

[UAE builds 'corridor of opportunity' with Asean trade deals as it tries to lure China investments](#)

[Thailand's PM front runner Pita faces another setback as poll body begins investigation](#)

## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On June 8, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, held a telephone conversation with [Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince](#) and Prime Minister, Mohammed bin Salman. The two leaders reviewed several bilateral issues focussing on defence, connectivity, and energy. The Saudi Crown Prince conveyed Riyadh's full support to [India's ongoing G20 Presidency](#).

The first Joint Committee Meeting of the [India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement](#) (CEPA) was held in New Delhi on June 12. The CEPA has added new momentum to India-UAE bilateral trade and investment relations. Both countries plan to [settle their trade in local currencies](#) and to double non-petroleum trade to USD 100 billion by 2030. Meanwhile, the first [India-UAE-France Maritime Partnership Exercise](#) was held in the Gulf of Oman between June 7-8.

The 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the '[Arab-China Business Conference](#)' was held in Saudi Arabia. On June 12, Arab and Chinese officials issued the "Riyadh Declaration" as part of their efforts to strengthen economic and investment partnership. Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister, Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, reiterated that Riyadh seeks "stronger [cooperation not competition with China](#)".

Amid uncertainty about the future of the Iran nuclear deal, US and Iranian officials held [indirect talks in Oman](#) in May 2023. The US confirmed that it [was in contact with Iran](#), however, denied that discussions on an interim agreement were taking place. In light of this, Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, warned that Israel will defend itself and won't be bound by any [new nuclear agreement with Iran](#).

## Other Developments

[UAE's President Sheikh Mohamed and Turkish President Erdogan hail progress in UAE-Turkey relations](#)

[China-Palestine Ties: President Mahmoud Abbas arrives in Beijing for four-day state visit](#)

[Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei says 'nothing wrong' with a nuclear deal with the West](#)

[US says Iran is helping Russia build drone manufacturing facility](#)

[US to rejoin UNESCO five years after quitting over Palestinian statehood](#)



## China

by

Angana Guha Roy

During a phone call on June 14, [China's foreign minister Qin Gang told the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken](#) that the US should stop interfering in the country's affairs. Qin said the US should respect China's core concerns, such as over the Taiwan issue. He noted that China-US ties "have encountered new difficulties and challenges" since the beginning of the year, and it is the responsibility of the two sides to work together to properly manage differences, promote exchanges and cooperation and stabilise relations.

Days after a US official confirmed that [China has been operating an intelligence unit in Cuba](#) for years and upgraded it in 2019, United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the Cuba operation was one of "a number of sensitive efforts by Beijing around the world to expand their overseas logistics basing collection infrastructure" to "project and sustain military power at a greater distance".

The [largest number of foreigners working in Bangladesh](#) are from China, followed by India. Of the 20,988 people currently working in Bangladesh from foreign countries on work permits, 6075 are Chinese. They are working in development projects, NGOs, Industries, and other organizations in Bangladesh, said Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

[China has once again sought Nepal's support for its newly announced Global Security Initiative \(GSI\)](#) and Global Civilization Initiative (GCI). During a meeting with National Assembly chair Ganesh Prasad Timlsina on June 13, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Chinese National People's Congress Zhao Leji said his country thanks Nepal for its active response to and support for the GDI and welcomes Nepal's support for and participation in the GSI and the GCI to jointly promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region and the world at large. Chinese leaders have repeatedly asked Nepal to support the GSI, but Nepali leaders, officials and diplomats have turned down the proposal as Nepal's foreign policy bars it from joining any security or military alliances. Nepal perceives the GSI as a military alliance.

## Other Developments

[Chinese national, who secured fake passport with Sri Lanka minister's help, protests deportation](#)

[Analysis: Germany to face EU ire over Huawei supplies ahead of China talks](#)

## Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

Kazakhstan organised the [Astana International Forum](#) from June 8-9. The forum was attended by leaders from Qatar, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and international organisations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The forum emphasised the importance of promoting diplomacy, multilateralism, and dialogue in a world that is becoming increasingly divided.

During the plenary session on June 8, the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, [called for amplifying the voices](#) of the middle power nations in the United Nations and, more specifically, within the Security Council. He argued that the foundations of the United Nations are being eroded, which has thrust the world order into geopolitical uncertainty. He emphasised that the global system must work for all, and “bring peace and prosperity to the many and not to the few”.

On June 9, the Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, spoke about [the challenges facing the global trading system](#) and proposed solutions during the second day of the Astana International Forum (AIF). Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala stressed that one of the biggest challenges is the geopolitical tensions leading to decoupling, deglobalisation and the risk of fragmentation of the global trading system. While she hinted at ‘protectionism’, she also stressed that countries must not completely retreat from trade, but in fact, must maintain the stability and openness of the global trading system. She warned that one must be “cautious because if the world trading system fragments, that could be very costly for the entire global economy”.

On June 8-9, 2023, the Consultative Council of the Heads of Consular Services of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (KSRKS) of the CIS member states held their [30th anniversary meeting](#). The parties discussed matters of cooperation under the Conventions and explored the potential for implementing electronic document management.

## Other Developments

[ILO To Review Turkmenistan Following Forced Labour Concerns In Cotton Supply Chain](#)

[Kyrgyzstan Has Spent 83.4 Billion Soms For Defence And Army Reinforcement In 2021-2022](#)

[Intergovernmental Turkmen-Georgian Commission for Economic Cooperation Holds Meeting In Tbilisi.](#)

[Astana International Forum Plenary Session Emphasised the Need for Multilateral Cooperation](#)



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