



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives

July 12, 2023



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Delhi Policy Group

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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.

Cover Image:

South Asia: Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives Abdullah Shahid held bilateral talks with Indian counterpart Dr S. Jaishankar in New Delhi on July 11, 2023. Source: [Twitter/@DrSJaishankar](https://twitter.com/DrSJaishankar)

Southeast Asia: The foreign ministers of ASEAN member countries, along with the Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, at the 56th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Jakarta on July 11, 2023. Source: [ASEAN Official Website](https://asean.org/)

West Asia: Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, met Sheikh Mohammed Al-Issa, Secretary-General of the Muslim World League on July 11, 2023. Source: [Official Twitter Handle of PMO India](https://twitter.com/PMOIndia)

China: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen met Chinese Premier Li Qiang in Beijing on July 7, 2023. Source: [Official Twitter Handle of Secretary Janet Yellen](https://twitter.com/SecYellen).

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives, Abdullah Shahid, [visited India](#) on July 11-12. During his visit, he held a bilateral meeting with India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar. They discussed bilateral, regional, and international issues of mutual interest and [concluded nine MoUs](#) under Phase II of the High Impact Community Development Projects Scheme. The visit is [considered crucial](#) against the backdrop of the Maldivian presidential election scheduled for September 9.

A [Chinese industrial delegation](#), after a meeting with the Taliban Acting Prime Minister Maulvi Abdul Kabir, has said it would spend USD 350 million in Afghanistan, particularly in the mining sector. On July 5, China launched a [new land link](#) to Afghanistan. A [freight train](#) departed from Lanzhou, the capital of northwest China's Gansu Province, headed for Hairatan in Afghanistan. The 3,125km route uses both railways and roads and passes through Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

On July 11, Pakistan received a USD 2 billion loan from [Saudi Arabia](#) for one year as part of a plan to raise funds under a condition set by the IMF for the new bailout package. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar also confirmed on July 7 that the United Arab Emirates has [assured its commitment](#) to its bilateral financial support of USD 1 billion to Pakistan. Meanwhile, prior to granting approval of the USD 3 billion Stand-by Arrangement (SBA), the IMF [held meetings](#) with three mainstream political parties of Pakistan, including PMLN, PPP, and the PTI to seek assurance of support on key objectives of the short-term programme.

During his visit to Bhutan, India's Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra [called on](#) the King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, in Gelephu on July 7. Bhutanese [Prime Minister](#) Lotay Tshering was also present at the meeting.

Other Developments

[India and Bangladesh have started bilateral trade in rupees from July 11.](#)

[Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra met with President Ranil Wickremesinghe during his official visit to Sri Lanka on July 11](#)

[Bangladesh and Nepal have agreed to sign a long-term agreement for the export of 40MW of electricity from Nepal to Bangladesh](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The [56th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting \(AMM\)](#) and related meetings commenced in Jakarta on July 11. This was the first AMM attended by Timor-Leste after attaining its observer status last year. The ministers had fruitful discussions on the ASEAN Power Grid, extended support to the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and stressed the importance of keeping the region free of nuclear weapons. Amidst discord on Myanmar, Indonesia, as the ASEAN chair, invited a non-political official representing Myanmar. China's State Councillor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang will not be attending the AMM citing "[health reasons](#)" and will be replaced by Wang Yi at the meetings.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary ASEAN-Japan friendship and cooperation, the [justice ministers](#) from Japan and ASEAN met in Tokyo on July 6 for the ASEAN-Japan Special Meeting of Justice Ministers (AJSMJ). The two sides agreed to cooperate in promoting the rule of law amid increasing maritime assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region. The representative reaffirmed their commitment to the "peaceful resolution of disputes" without "resorting to the threat or use of force" in the joint statement. On July 7, [ASEAN-G7 Justice Ministers' Interface](#) was convened to discuss issues of common concern and the promotion and maintenance of international peace and order.

In July, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) reported China's [increased presence](#) in areas near Reed Bank, located within Manila's 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ). It spotted 47 Chinese militia vessels and seven Chinese maritime assets in the Iroquois Reef, including two warships, near Sabina Shoal in the disputed South China Sea. The AFP stated that "these developments raise an alarming concern about China's intentions and actions within these disputed waters". The country urged China to "cease its swarming of vessels to respect our sovereign rights". The [US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin](#) called Beijing's actions "coercive and risky."

Other Developments

[Ukraine should shun US cluster bombs, learn from Cambodia's 'painful experience': PM Hun Sen](#)

[Philippines mulls higher defence budget to tackle South China Sea 'harassment'](#)

[Indonesia seizes Iranian-flagged tanker suspected of illegal oil transfer](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On July 11, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, met [Sheikh Mohammed Al-Issa](#), Secretary-General of the Muslim World League, an international Islamic NGO based in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. As part of their discussions, the two leaders discussed ways to promote interfaith harmony and peace. Meanwhile, India's National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval, praised Sheikh Mohammed Al-Issa as being an authentic [voice of moderate Islam globally](#) and emphasised the strong cultural, economic, and political ties between India and Saudi Arabia.

The Sixth Joint Ministerial Meeting of the strategic dialogue between the [Gulf Cooperation Council \(GCC\) and Russia](#) was held in Moscow on July 10. The two sides discussed ways to strengthen and further develop Gulf-Russia relations and international efforts to resolve the Ukraine crisis. Amid the continued tensions between Washington and Beijing, [China is looking to Saudi Arabia](#) to boost its economic growth and influence in the Middle East.

On July 10, NATO Secretary-General, Jens Stoltenberg welcomed Turkish President Erdogan's decision to forward [Sweden's NATO accession protocol](#) to the country's Grand National Assembly. Earlier, the US reiterated its support for selling [F-16 fighter jets to Turkey](#) and backed Ankara's aspirations to join the European Union.

Other Developments

[PM Modi in Abu Dhabi on July 15 to complete the India-France-UAE triad](#)

[Russian veto signals end of Turkey-based UN aid operation in Syria](#)

[US intelligence says Iran not currently developing nuclear weapons](#)

[US and Israel start joint military exercise](#)

[President Biden: This is one of the most extreme Israeli governments I've seen](#)

China

by

Angana Guha Roy

After the recent visit to Beijing by [US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen](#), China has called on the United States to take “practical action” in response to its concerns about sanctions on Chinese firms. China agreed to “maintain high-level exchanges and communication at all levels in the economic field”, its finance ministry said.

[July 11 marked the seventh anniversary](#) of an Arbitral Tribunal constituted under the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention rejecting the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) expansive South China Sea maritime claims. In a statement, the US State Department said, “The United States reaffirms its July 13, 2020, policy regarding maritime claims in the South China Sea. We continue to urge Beijing to comport its maritime claims with international law as reflected in the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention; cease its routine harassment of claimant state vessels lawfully operating in their respective exclusive economic zones; halt its disruption to states’ sovereign rights to explore, exploit, conserve, and manage natural resources; and end its interference with the freedoms of navigation and overflight of states lawfully operating in the region”.

[Nepal and China have reached an agreement](#) to accelerate the completion of pending projects announced by the Chinese government in 2018 and 2019 under the controversial Belt and Road Initiative to boost infrastructure in the landlocked Himalayan nation, a media report said.

Bangladesh follows a “balanced and independent” foreign policy and is not subservient to any country, [Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen said](#), emphasising that his country was “not China's tail”. Momen also said that its relations with next-door neighbour India are “rock-solid” and added, “We are in a golden chapter in our relations with India”. “Some people think we are rushing towards China, but (actually) we are not heading towards anyone,” Momen said while speaking at an official event. He further called China a development partner but ruled out any possibility that Bangladesh could be exposed to a “Chinese debt trap”, an idea which, he said, was being propagated by some groups or ‘pundits’.

Other developments

[China on brink of consumer deflation](#)

[Yellen Trip Aids Fragile Effort by U.S., China to Keep Talking](#)

[How China's latest export curbs could hurt India](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On Kazakhstan is set to host [the Energy Week Central Asia and Mongolia 2023](#) conference on September 19-20. The conference aims to promote the use of renewable energy in the region and attract foreign investment. It will cover several topics, including energy security amid global challenges, the need for global developers to invest in the region, and the issue of nuclear plant use. The conference is aimed to bolster Central Asia's potential to become a clean energy hub that can mobilise its renewables.

[Uzbekistan re-elected President Shavkat Mirziyoyev](#) for a seven-year term with 81.7 percent of the vote on July 9. President Mirziyoyev has led Central Asia's most populous nation since 2016 and called for a snap election after changing the constitution through a referendum which reset his term count and extended the presidential term from five to seven years. [India's Election Commissioner, Anup Chandra Pandey](#), was invited by the Central Election Commission of Uzbekistan to act as an international observer for the elections.

Uzbekistan recently proposed [formalising a trilateral](#) with India and Iran to avail of the benefits of "regional connectivity initiatives, including the Chabahar Port in Iran". This follows the efforts of India, Russia and Iran to promote freight transit through the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). Additionally, Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev backed the INSTC and the Chabahar Port as avenues for regional connectivity during the recent Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's (SCO) Summit.

President Mirziyoyev received [the Secretary General of the SCO](#) Zhang Ming on July 10. Issues of further developing multilateral cooperation between the SCO member states and the practical implementation of the initiatives put forward during the Samarkand and New Delhi Summits were discussed.

Other Developments

[In Uzbekistan, Another Z-Artist's Concert Cancelled](#)

[Uniting for progress: Launch of the Central Asian Alliance to End Gender-Based Violence](#)

[Kazakhstan's President Tokayev Congratulates Uzbekistan's Shavkat Mirziyoyev on Election Win](#)



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