



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## India's Proximity Archives

### July 19, 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:** *Inaugural BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat held in Bangkok, Thailand on July 17, 2023.* Source: [BIMSTEC.org](https://www.bimstec.org)

**Southeast Asia:** *Dr. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India, at the 13<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit in Jakarta on July 14, 2023.*

(Source: [Dr. Jaishankar/Official Twitter](https://twitter.com/DrJaishankar))

**West Asia:** *The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, met UAE's President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi on July 15, 2023.* Source: [Official Twitter Handle of MEA India](https://twitter.com/OfficialTwitterHandleofMEAIndia)

**Central Asia:** *Kyrgyz Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zheenbek Kulubaev, met with India's Deputy National Security Advisor Vikram Misri for strategic consultations on security issues during his visit to the Kyrgyz Republic on July 17, 2023.*

Source: [The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic](https://www.ministryofforeignaffairs.gov.kg).

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## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

On 17 July 2023, Thailand hosted the inaugural [BIMSTEC](#) Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Bangkok. During the meeting, there was a broad agreement on the importance of creating crisis response mechanisms to coordinate different contingencies within the BIMSTEC region. The meeting also considered establishing digital payment systems and trade settlements, as well as strengthening cooperation in cyber security and the prevention of transnational crimes.

Twelve soldiers of the Pakistan Army were killed while averting a [terrorist attack](#) on military installations in Zhob Cantt and Sui areas of Balochistan on July 12. Following the attack Corps Commanders meeting was held on July 17, in which military leadership [blamed Kabul](#) for the uptick in militancy in Pakistan and providing safe haven to TTP. Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif [stated that](#) "Afghanistan is neither fulfilling its obligation as a neighbouring and brotherly country nor safeguarding the peace agreement."

Responding to Pakistan's allegations over the Taliban's disregarding commitments made in Doha Agreement 2020, Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said that the deal had been signed with the US, not with Pakistan. Further he said, Afghan de facto authorities had conducted [discussions with Pakistan](#) regarding the TTP and would take action against it if the Pakistani government shares evidence of the presence of the TTP in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the [US National Security Council spokesperson](#) during a press briefing on July 17 stated, "We've seen no indication that Afghan refugees in Pakistan or along that border are guilty of acts of terrorism."

### Other Developments

[Pakistan COAS Gen Syed Asim Munir met Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and other leaders During his visit to Tehran on July 16.](#)

[China-Pakistan Joint Research Centre on Earth Sciences will set up a natural disaster observation and research centre in the Karakoram Mountains.](#)

[The 7th Deputy NSA level meeting of the Colombo Security Conclave \(CSC\) was hosted by the Maldives on July 12.](#)

[Poppy cultivation had been eradicated from 40,000 acres of land in the northern province of Badakhshan, Afghanistan, in the past three months.](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The [13th East Asia Summit \(EAS\) Foreign Ministers' Meeting](#) was convened on July 14 in Jakarta. The members reviewed the progress of the EAS Plan of Action 2018-2022 and highlighted future areas of cooperation. The meeting adopted the EAS Plan of Action (2024-2028), which "aims to strengthen the relevance, coherence, and effectiveness of the EAS as the Leaders-led forum for promoting peace, stability, and economic prosperity in the region". The Plan of Action included a reference to ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP), the first such reference in an EAS document adopted by Foreign Ministers.

External Affairs Minister of India [Dr. Jaishankar, attended the 13<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit](#) in Jakarta on July 14. He reaffirmed India's support for the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and its implementation through EAS. Dr. Jaishankar affirmed ASEAN centrality in the Indo-Pacific and stated that Quad will always complement ASEAN and ASEAN-led mechanisms.

The [56<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting \(AMM\)](#), chaired by Indonesia, was held in Jakarta on July 11-12, 2023. The meeting reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment to the Five-Point Consensus (5PC) to address the political crisis in Myanmar. The joint communique appreciated the efforts of Indonesia, as the ASEAN Chair, to intensify engagements with all relevant stakeholders in Myanmar to reach a 'comprehensive political solution'. The joint statement greatly emphasised on the implementation of the AOIP through concrete projects and activities and the establishment of cooperation between ASEAN and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

On July 13, China's top diplomat [Wang Yi met with ASEAN foreign ministers](#) in Indonesia. The two sides agreed to set up guidelines to speed up negotiations for a code of conduct (COC) in the disputed South China Sea. During the meeting, Wang Yi stated, "China welcomes the successful conclusion of the second reading of the Code of Conduct for the South China Sea, and supports all parties in accelerating the formation of the guidelines, with the hope that the guidelines will continue playing a constructive role."

## Other Developments

[China says it does not accept Philippines' 2016 South China Sea arbitration win](#)

[Thai foreign minister says jailed leader Suu Kyi urges dialogue with Myanmar's military](#)

[China's Xi tells ex-Philippine president Duterte to promote ties with Beijing](#)

## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

Continuing the deepening of [India-UAE Strategic Partnership](#), Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with UAE's President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi on July 15. Trade and investment, fintech, energy, climate action, higher education, and people-to-people ties were among the topics discussed by the two leaders. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Central Banks of India and the UAE to establish a framework for promoting the use of [local currencies for cross-border transactions](#), as well as interconnecting their payment and messaging systems. An MoU was also signed to establish an Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Abu Dhabi.

Japanese Prime Minister, [Fumio Kishida visited the UAE](#) and Saudi Arabia on July 17. During his visit to Abu Dhabi, PM Kishida focused on energy security and agreed to enhance cooperation with the UAE on technology and climate change. Meanwhile, as part of the [Saudi-Japanese Vision 2030](#), PM Kishida and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met in Jeddah to discuss ways to enhance trade and investment cooperation. Turkish [President Erdogan](#) is also visiting the Gulf to seek investments in order to revive the country's sluggish economy.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog will address a [joint meeting of the US Congress](#) on July 19 commemorating Israel's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In light of this, President Biden and President Herzog reaffirmed their commitment to a [strong alliance between Israel and the US](#) that is based on shared democratic values, above any political controversy. The two countries also called for [expanding the 'Abraham Accords'](#) and preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Moroccan sovereignty over the disputed [Western Sahara](#) had been recognized by the US as part of the Abraham Accords. In line with this, on July 18, Israel has also recognised [Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara](#).



## Other Developments

[UN Human Rights Council condemns attacks on Quran despite Western states' rejection](#)

[President Biden invites PM Netanyahu to meet in the US](#)

[U.S. House Backs Israel in 412-9 Vote After Democrat Called State 'Racist'](#)

[Iran says respect for countries' territorial integrity 'undeniable'](#)

[US orders deployment of fighter jets and Navy destroyer to the Middle East in response to Iranian activities](#)



## China

by

Angana Guha Roy

A [report in the Financial Times](#) reported that cremations in China's Zhejiang province increased by 73 percent from a year earlier to 171,000 during the first quarter of the year. The number was much higher than the 99,000 and 91,000 deaths reported in the same time period in 2022 and 2021, respectively. It is being reported that China has deleted mortality data that offered an indication of the heavy death toll from Beijing's relaxation of Covid-19 controls at the end of last year.

The Communist Party of China (CPC) launched the ["Silk Roadster" platform under the Belt and Road Initiative \(BRI\)](#) in Nepal. Chinese leaders said the platform is a new concept brought to Nepal to mark the tenth anniversary of the proposition of the BRI by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

According to reports, [China's exports in yuan terms decreased](#) at a faster pace in June as a slowdown in the global economy curbed demand for Chinese goods and weighed on the outlook for manufacturing. Exports declined about 16% in yuan terms in June from a year ago, more than the 0.8% decrease in May. Imports contracted 6.8%, steeper than an expected 4.0% decline. Meanwhile, [property investment in China slid nearly 8%](#) in the first half of the year, marking a deepening decline of the real estate sector that accounts for up to a quarter of the China's economy.

### Other Developments

[Sri Lankan leader seeks to disarm India's China fears](#)

[Bangladesh: Muslim scholars demand end to Chinese persecution of Uyghurs](#)

[China's Border Talks With Bhutan Are Aimed at India](#)

[Maldives' nascent presidential race keeps India and China on edge](#)

## Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

According to a Kazakh Foreign Ministry statement, under the chairmanship of Kazakhstan, the [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation \(SCO\) will be reformed](#) to promote a “practical and effective platform for expanding trade and security cooperation”. SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming endorsed Kazakhstan’s agenda for 2023-24, expressing hope that Kazakhstan can take the SCO to “a new level of practical interaction” for the people of our countries.

On July 17, India’s Deputy National Security Advisor Vikram Misri, met Kyrgyz’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Zheenbek Kulubaev in the framework of participating in [the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kyrgyz-Indian Strategic Consultations](#) on security issues between the secretariats of both nations’ Security Councils. During their conversation, the parties discussed international and regional security issues and Kyrgyz-Indian cooperation. They stressed the need for close collaboration between the two countries to fight against international terrorism, extremism, transnational organised crime and drug trafficking. The parties also reaffirmed their readiness to strengthen and expand the Kyrgyz-Indian strategic partnership. They noted that an active political dialogue between the two countries has a positive impact not only on the development of cooperation in the field of security but also on the expansion of mutually beneficial cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and India in all areas of mutual interest.

The two-day [Central Asian Security and Cooperation Forum \(CAF\)](#), which aims to study the Asia’s global security challenges, kicked off on July 13. The CAF under the themes ‘Asia in the Changing World: Agenda for the Future’ is hosted by the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of Kazakhstan and co-organised with the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the first day, the participants discussed security challenges and key cooperation trends in Asia along with topics on ‘the new continental interconnectedness of Eurasia and the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route’. The [second day](#) featured panel sessions covering topics such as ‘Asia’s Global Security’, ‘Global Competition for Innovation’, ‘New Technologies’, ‘Artificial Intelligence and Human Capital’ and the ‘Prospects of the Middle Corridor’. The Forum also hosted parallel sessions on the rise of asymmetric threats, the regionalisation of Central Asia, and new norms, values and principles of cooperation in Asia.

The Consulate General of Uzbekistan [hosted a meeting](#) with the Deputy Director General at the Foreign Affairs Department of China's province of Anhui, Xiaoling Yuan. The parties discussed the possibility of cooperation between the two countries' regions. Xiaoling Yuan noted the rapid development of comprehensive cooperation between China and Uzbekistan and stressed the importance of the agreements reached at the highest level in recent years. An agreement was also reached on establishing direct working relations between the leading travel companies of Uzbekistan and Anhui province.

## Other Developments

[Uzbekistan and the United States discuss bilateral cooperation](#)

[Uzbekistan and Türkiye agree to strengthen inter-MFA relations](#)

[Kazakhstan to purchase Turkish Armoured Vehicles for \\$2.5 Billion](#)

[Kazakhstan, US Confirm Intention to Strengthen Enhanced Strategic Partnership](#)

[President of Tajikistan to visit Saudi Arabia on July 18 to participate in the First Summit of the Heads of State of the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf and Central Asia.](#)



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