



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives August 9, 2023



Volume I, Issue 32 | August 9, 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.

Cover Image:

South Asia: Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met with coalition partner Maulana Fazlur Rehman to discuss upcoming elections, July 31, 2023. Source: [Dawn](#)

Southeast Asia: Mr. Saurabh Kumar, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, India, and Mr. Sarun Charoensuwan, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Thailand at the 7th Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between India and Thailand in Bangkok on August 7, 2023. Source: [MEA Spokesperson/Official X Handle](#)

West Asia: Saudi Arabia hosted a meeting of National Security Advisors from over 40 countries to discuss the Ukraine conflict on August 5, 2023. Source: [Saudi Press Agency Official X Handle](#)

Central Asia: India's Deputy National Security Advisor, Vikram Misri, attended the Fourth India-Kazakhstan Security Dialogue with Deputy Secretary General of Kazakhstan Nurzhan Kajiakbarov in Astana on August 3, 2023. Source: [Embassy of India in Kazakhstan](#)

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif [announced](#) that he will dissolve the National Assembly on August 9. The incumbent assembly's term is scheduled to end on August 12. According to Pakistan's Constitution, if the assembly completes its tenure, elections are to be held in 60 days, but in case of premature dissolution, this period is extended to 90 days. The Election Commission of Pakistan on August 8 [disqualified](#) former Prime Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan for five years. The notification cited the conviction of Imran Khan in the Toshakhana case in which he is [sentenced](#) to three years in prison.

On August 8, Pakistan National Assembly (NA) [approved an amendment](#) to the Official Secrets Act 1923 which will grant blanket powers to intelligence agencies for raiding and detaining any citizen, even under suspicion of them breaching the law. Earlier on August 3, NA passed a bill to set up a [new authority](#) to counter money laundering and terror financing. It will save Pakistan from the punitive actions of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a [telephone conversation](#) with Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Prime Minister of Nepal on August 5. The two leaders reviewed various aspects of the India-Nepal bilateral cooperation and followed up on discussions held during Prime Minister Prachand's recent visit to India. Nepal and India plan to convene the [seventh meeting](#) of the joint commission. However, the Nepali side has yet to decide on the date to convene the meeting, which will see the participation of foreign ministers from both countries.

The Bangladesh government has declared [four cross-border trans-shipment routes](#) for Indian traders from northeastern states. The four protocol routes are Chittagong Port-Akhaura-Agartala, Mongla Port-Akhaura-Agartala, Chittagong-Bibirbazar-Srimantapur, and Mongla Port- Bibirbazar-Srimantapur.

Other Developments

[Kazakhstan signs USD 200 million in contracts with Afghanistan on August 2-3.](#)

[Pakistan's population has crossed 240 million and the growth rate stands at 2.55 percent, according to the 2023 national census.](#)

[The Maldives Supreme Court jailed former President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom barring him from running for upcoming presidential elections in September.](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The [7th Foreign Office Consultations \(FOCs\)](#) between India and Thailand were held in Bangkok on August 7, 2023. The meeting was co-chaired by Saurabh Kumar, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, India, and Sarun Charoensuwan, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Thailand. The two sides discussed ways to strengthen cooperation in trade and investment, MSMEs, defence and security, connectivity, health, culture, and science and technology.

Earlier, Secretary Saurabh Kumar, participated in the [East Asia Summit Senior Officials' Meeting \(EAS SOM\)](#) held in Bali, Indonesia on August 3, 2023. The country reaffirmed its support for ASEAN centrality and the EAS as a premier leaders forum. Mr. Kumar conveyed India's views on issues of regional and global significance including the South China Sea. During his visit to Thailand, he also [called on Don Pramudwinai](#), Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Thailand in Bangkok.

The [Philippines accused China's coastguard](#) of 'blocking and water-cannoning a Philippine military supply boat in the disputed South China Sea' on August 5. The Philippine coast guard vessels carrying supplies for Filipino military personnel stationed at Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly Islands were targeted. The Philippines condemned China's coastguard for its "[excessive and offensive actions](#)" against its vessels. The [US State Department](#) condemned the actions saying they were carried out by the Chinese coastguard and "maritime militia" and threaten regional peace and stability.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry urged the Philippines again to withdraw its [grounded warship in the Second Thomas Shoal](#) on August 8. Manila grounded the warship in 1999 to establish its sovereignty claims in the region. The country has registered multiple complaints against China's coast guard for impeding its resupply missions at the shoal. The Philippines reinstated that it will "[never abandon Ayungin Shoal](#). We are committed to Ayungin Shoal".

Other Developments

[Cambodia's king appoints Hun Sen's son as new leader](#)

[Indonesia defends its curbs on nickel ore exports amid EU claim of breach in international trade](#)

[US expresses concern over China involvement in Manila Bay land reclamation project](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On August 5, Saudi Arabia hosted a meeting of National Security Advisors from over 40 countries and international organisations to discuss [the Ukraine conflict](#). Participants agreed that further international consultations and exchange of opinions are essential to build a common ground for peace.

The Indian Navy ships INS Vishakhapatnam and INS Trikand arrived at Dubai's Port Rashid on August 8 for [bilateral exercises with UAE's Navy](#) as part of the deepening of India-UAE defence partnership. On August 5, INS Chennai, deployed in the Red Sea undertook a passage exercise with the Royal Saudi Naval Ship HMS Al Jubail to [ensure safe and secure seas](#). Meanwhile, the Indian Air Force received Spike NLOS (non-line of sight) [anti-tank guided missiles from Israel](#) boosting its ability to destroy targets hidden behind mountains.

China and the UAE are scheduled to conduct their [maiden air exercise in August 2023](#) in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region despite the US-led West's concerns regarding China's human rights violations in Xinjiang. Besides energy trade, China's anti-piracy operations, construction of commercial ports, and growing arms sales underscore its intent to play a larger role in West Asia. Meanwhile, Saudi Aramco reiterated its intent to increase [energy investments in China](#).

Amid continuing [US-Iran tensions](#), there are reports that over 3000 US military personnel have reached the Red Sea as part of the Pentagon's response to Iran's recent seizure of tankers.

Other Developments

[China praises Ukraine talks in Saudi Arabia that Russia said were 'doomed to fail'](#)

[Oil prices ease as bearish China data fuels demand concerns](#)

[PM Netanyahu: Normalisation with Saudi Arabia not linked to the creation of the Palestinian state](#)

[UAE's President meets President El Sisi in Egypt; bilateral ties discussed](#)

China

by

Angana Guha Roy

Amidst the border standoff with China, External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar highlighted the [crucial role infrastructure development](#) plays in bolstering India's security along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China. Further, Dr. Jaishankar discussed the evolution of India's strategic approach since 2014 and its commitment to improving border infrastructure.

[The government has prohibited Indian manufacturers of military drones](#) from using components made in China. The decision came after serious concerns over security vulnerabilities. Indian defence officials believe that intelligence-gathering could be compromised by the use of China-made parts in military drones.

There has been an unfavourable assessment of Nepal's Prime Minister [Pushpa Kamal Dahal's official visit to India](#) by members of his party's central committee. At a meeting with the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist Centre (CPN-MC), the members said this visible tilt towards India – described by 'Prachanda' as historic – will anger China. Parsuram Tamang, a central committee member, warned that such a situation is not ideal for Nepal which has long pursued a non-aligned foreign policy.

[According to Chinese customs statistics released on July 8](#), China's exports suffered their biggest drop in more than three years in July as global demand slowed, adding further pressure on Beijing to find ways to reinvigorate the world's second-largest economy. The value of exports, measured in US dollars, fell 14.5% last month from a year ago, the biggest drop since February 2020 when the initial Covid-19 outbreak battered trade and production.

Other Developments

[Nepal's PM to visit China in September end](#)

[Bangladesh's Awami League Reaches Out to India and China](#)

[Sri Lanka issues tenders choosing India over China for power projects near Jaffna](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

During the [Fourth India-Kazakhstan Security Dialogue](#) held in Astana on August 3, India's Deputy National Security Advisor Vikram Misri and Deputy Secretary General of Kazakhstan Nurzhan Kajiakbarov discussed bilateral and regional issues, including the situation in Afghanistan. The two sides agreed to [further enhance bilateral security cooperation](#), including in the fields of counter-terrorism, combating radicalisation, narcotics control, cyber security, connectivity, and defence cooperation.

Kazakh Trade and Integration Minister Serik Zhumangharin opened the [Kazakh-Afghan Business Forum](#) on August 3. Minister Zhumangharin said, "Kazakhstan wants Afghanistan to develop further as an independent, neutral, integral, peaceful, democratic, and flourishing nation". Additionally, Minister Zhumangharin stressed that economic ties between the two countries should be developed and enhanced.

Prior to the Forum, [Deputy Foreign Minister Qanat Tumysh emphasised](#) on July 31 that the Kazakh-Afghan Business Forum will not affect Kazakhstan's official stance on the Taliban. However, although the Kazakh government officially considers the Taliban, a terrorist organisation, Astana maintains official contact with "Afghanistan's Taliban imposed government".

On August 3, authorities in Kyrgyzstan's southern region of Batken said that the border with Tajikistan, which was shut down more than two years ago following a deadly standoff, can "[gradually reopen](#)" after the delimitation and demarcation work between the two nations is fully accomplished. [The Batken Regional Administration](#) emphasised that the border issues had been discussed last month by Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan officials, adding that security and safety issues in areas close to the three nations were the main focus.

Other Developments

[Russia Targets Neighbour Kazakhstan With Army Recruitment Ads](#)

[Russia: Debts causing rise in illegal migration among Central Asians](#)

[Last Messaging App 'Disappears' From Turkmenistan Amid World's Slowest Internet Speed](#)

[Kazakhstan announces plans to deliver 100,000 ton of oil to Germany via Druzhba in August](#)

[Kazakhstan signs USD 200 million in contracts with Afghanistan during the Kazakh-Afghanistan Business Forum](#)



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