

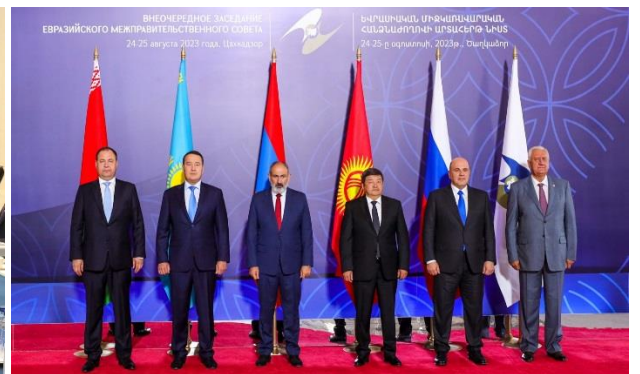


# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## India's Proximity Archives August 30, 2023



Volume I, Issue 35 | August 30, 2023

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:

**South Asia:** India and Bangladesh held the fifth Annual Defence Dialogue on August 28, 2023, in Dhaka. Source: [PIB](#)

**Southeast Asia:** Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong with Vietnam Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh in Hanoi on August 28, 2023. Source: [PM Lee/ Official Twitter](#)

**China:** The US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo met Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China Wang Wentao in Beijing on August 28, 2023. Source: [X/@SecRaimondo](#)

**Central Asia:** Joint photo of the heads of delegations taking part in the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council meeting in Tsaghkadzor, Armenia on August 24, 2023. Source: [Official Information Source of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan](#)

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## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina [attended the 15th BRICS Summit](#) held in Johannesburg on August 22-24. On the sidelines of the summit, she held [bilateral meetings](#) with heads of the state of Brazil, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Iran to discuss enhancement of bilateral trade and investment relations. While discussing the outcome of her visit, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stated there was [no request](#) from Bangladesh to become a member of BRICS right now.

The 10th Bangladesh-United States bilateral Defence Dialogue was held in Dhaka on August 22-23. Earlier, the US Embassy [Spokesperson said](#), "the United States and Bangladesh share a vision to ensure the Indo-Pacific region is free, open, peaceful, and secure." India also held the fifth Annual Defence Dialogue with Bangladesh on August 28 in Dhaka. Indian Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane [co-chaired the meeting](#) with his Bangladeshi counterpart Lt Gen Waker-Uz-Zaman, Principal Staff Officer, Armed Forces Division. The talks covered the existing bilateral exercises as both sides agreed to increase the complexity of them.

On August 25, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) members expressed concerns about the presence and [increased activity of terrorist groups in Afghanistan](#) during the discussion of the 17th report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Daesh. UN counter-terrorism chief Vladimir Voronkov said that the situation in Afghanistan is growing increasingly complex and that some 20 different terrorist groups are present in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the Taliban government has [rejected the UN Security Council report](#) and called for transparent involvement in such issues.

A [nationwide protest](#) erupted in Pakistan over massive power bills. In the cabinet meeting held on August 29, the interim government could not come up with any relief measures. Meanwhile, the value of [Pakistan's currency](#) keeps sliding. As of August 29, the price of USD was PKR 303.05 in the interbank exchange. It is affecting the price of energy [products](#), petrol and high-speed diesel are estimated to go up by about PKR 9-10 per litre and PKR 18-20 per litre, respectively.

## Other Developments

[The United States has clarified that it agrees with the interpretative declaration added to the Millennium Challenge Corporation compact by the Nepali Parliament.](#)

[The 5th Round of Sri Lanka - Thailand Bilateral Political Consultations was held on August 28 in Colombo.](#)

[Pakistan Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar reconstituted three key committees of the federal cabinet including a downgrade of all important Cabinet Committee on Energy \(CCoE\) with a greater focus on Chinese investments.](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong concluded a [three-day official visit to Vietnam](#) on August 29. During the visit, he met with Vietnam PM Pham Minh Chinh, Nguyen Phu Trong, General Secretary of Communist Party, Vuong Dinh Hue, National Assembly Chairman, and called on President Vo Van Thuong. The two sides concluded seven MoUs and bilateral agreements on connectivity, green economy, innovation, and skills development.

The Philippines and Australia conducted [their first-ever joint naval exercises](#) in the South China Sea on August 25. The exercises were conducted at a naval base about 240 km (150 miles) east of Scarborough Shoal, seized by China from the Philippines in 2012. The exercises stimulated retaking an enemy-controlled island. Philippines President Marcos Jr. hailed the exercises as an “extremely important” example of close cooperation.

On August 24, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin [hosted Indonesian Defence Minister](#) Prabowo Subianto at the Pentagon. The two sides discussed their mutual intention to increase defence capabilities “like fighter aircraft upgrades, new multi-role fighter aircraft, and additional fixed and rotary wing transport aircraft”. Secretary Austin reiterated the US' commitment “to bolster defence relationship” with Indonesia. This comes in the same week as Indonesia announced a deal to buy [24 transport helicopters](#) from Lockheed Martin.

### Other Developments

[South China Sea: Japan-based US forces aim to check Beijing's 'aggressive behaviour', fleet commander says](#)

[New Thai PM Srettha takes office, vows four years of change](#)

[Myanmar expels top Timor-Leste diplomat](#)

## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

A number of world leaders, including those from the United Arab Emirates and Israel, congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the people of India on the success of ISRO's ["Chandrayaan-3" mission](#). Prime Minister Modi stated that ["Chandrayaan's success augurs well for humanity](#), especially for the countries of the Global South". Meanwhile, PM Modi expressed India's support for the expansion and [modernisation of the 'BRICS'](#) and reiterated the necessity of reforming other global institutions that were established in the 20th century. Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates have been [invited to join the BRICS](#) forum from January 1, 2024.

In addition to providing a [greater voice to the Global South](#), an expanded BRICS would enhance security in West Asia (Middle East), [balance international energy markets](#), and improve food security.

A day after the conclusion of the G20 Summit to be held in New Delhi on September 9-10, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and Prime Minister, [Mohammed bin Salman](#), will visit India on September 11. Meanwhile, UAE's DP World will reportedly invest USD 510 million to build a new container terminal at [Kandla Port in India's Gujarat state](#).

Enhancing [India's strategic ties with Egypt](#) and the US, the Indian Armed Forces will participate in the multinational tri-services joint military exercise 'Bright Star-23' that will take place in Egypt from August 31 to September 14.

A meeting between Israel's Foreign Minister Eli Cohen and Libya's Foreign Minister [Najla Al-Mangoush](#) has caused a stir in Libya. In response to the uproar, Libya's Prime Minister, Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh, sacked Najla Al-Mangoush. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu reportedly instructed the country's ministers to obtain approval from the PMO before disclosing [details about secret diplomatic meetings](#).

## Other Developments

[U.S. tells Israel mega-deal with Saudis must include concessions to Palestinians](#)

[Saudi Arabia considers nuclear deal with China and Russia to put pressure on the US](#)

[US lawmakers visit north-west Syria to highlight humanitarian catastrophe](#)



## China

by

Angana Guha Roy

India has lodged a [strong protest](#) with China over a new map that laid extensive claims on India's territory in Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh. Reacting to the reports, India's foreign ministry spokesman Arindam Bagchi said in a statement, "We have today lodged a strong protest through [diplomatic channels](#) with the Chinese side on the so-called 2023 'standard map' of China that lays claim to India's territory" ...We reject these claims as they have no basis. Such steps by the Chinese side only complicate the resolution of the boundary question."

US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo during her visit to Beijing on August 29, said, the US and China have agreed to set up new [channels of communication](#) for economic and commercial issues. A new bilateral forum will be formed to discuss export control measures to reduce misunderstanding of national security policies. They also agreed to establish an "export control enforcement information exchange platform" to "reduce misunderstanding of US national security policies".

President Xi Jinping met with Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the sidelines of the [BRICS Summit](#) in Johannesburg. Xi Jinping noted that China and Bangladesh enjoy traditional friendship. He emphasized that China supports Bangladesh in safeguarding national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and in opposing external interference, so that the country can maintain domestic unity and stability and achieve development and revitalization.

A Chinese ship is likely to dock at the Colombo port in Sri Lanka. According to reports, the Lankan government has [granted permission](#) for the Chinese "research" ship 'Shi Yan 6' to dock amid Indian concerns. The ship is likely to call at the Colombo Port in October.

Media Director of the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence, Colonel Nalin Herath, said permission from the ministry has been given for the ship in question based on a request made by Lanka's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA). He said NARA is scheduled to conduct research with the Chinese research ship, and the date of the ship's arrival in Sri Lanka is not yet confirmed.

## Other Developments

[Bhutan, China Set up a Technical Team on Delimitation of Boundary](#)

## Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

The [Eurasian Intergovernmental Council meeting](#) was held on August 24-25 under the Russian chairmanship of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Members [discussed](#) ways to deepen integration processes within the EAEU and the strategic vectors of the Union's medium and long-term development. The Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, [Alikhan Smailov](#), highlighted the significance of staying true to the Union's objectives and ensuring its members reap the tangible benefits of integration.

A report published by Bloomberg on August 25, revealed that Kazakhstan, the world's biggest uranium producer, intends to [file a legal demand](#) to make it eligible for a seat on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) board. According to a statement shared among top diplomats, Kazakhstan's exclusion from the IAEA's primary decision-making council is "deeply discouraging" and goes against "the fundamental principle of equality". Despite its efforts in the past, Kazakhstan has not been able to join the IAEA's regional grouping, along with other Central Asian countries like Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

On August 28, French President Emmanuel Macron vowed to [launch a new diplomatic initiative](#) to up the pressure on Azerbaijan over its blockade of the Armenian-controlled areas of Nagorno-Karabakh. Without giving any details regarding the initiative, President Macron told a conference of French ambassadors, "We will demand full respect for the Lachin humanitarian corridor, and we will again launch a diplomatic initiative internationally to increase pressure on this issue.

Following Macron's statement, [Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry Spokesman Aykhan Hajizada](#) said, "French President Emmanuel Macron's biased views reiterated during the Ambassadorial Conference of August 28 undermine the peace process while creating the wrong impression on the current situation in the regional and unilaterally defending Armenia. He also claimed that Macron's statements "attests to the erroneous policy of France".

[On August 28](#), official Kyrgyz-Palestinian negotiations began at the Ala-Archa State Residence (Kyrgyzstan), where a wide range of issues on developing cooperation between the two countries was discussed. During the talks, an understanding was reached of the importance of further strengthening the

political dialogue and intensifying interaction in various areas. Considering the existing opportunities, [the heads of the foreign ministries expressed](#) their mutual interest in developing bilateral cooperation in multiple fields. Bilateral documents on cooperation in healthcare, culture, and agriculture and between the foreign ministries and national news agencies of the two countries were also signed.

## **Other Developments**

[Kazakhstan to Share Best Practices in Digital Government with Tajikistan](#)

[Military Contingent Of Kyrgyz Armed Forces To Participate In CSTO Exercises In Belarus](#)

[Kazakhstan's 40-Year History of Nuclear Testing: Call to Action for Nonproliferation Education](#)



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