



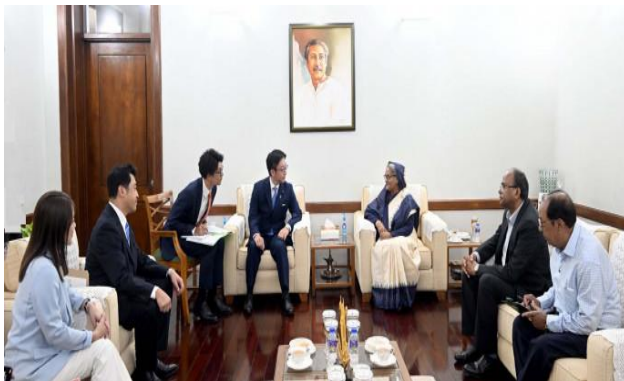
Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives

September 6, 2023



Volume I, Issue 36 | September 6, 2023

Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003

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.

Cover Image:

South Asia: A five-member Japanese parliamentary delegation, led by the director of the committee on general affairs, House of Councillors, Nakanishi Yusuke paid a courtesy call to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 5, 2023. Source: [The Business Standard](#)

Southeast Asia: Indonesia President Jokowi Widodo addresses the leaders of ASEAN member countries at the opening session of the 43rd ASEAN Summit in Jakarta, Indonesia on September 4, 2023. (Source: [ASEAN/Official Website](#))

West Asia: Turkish President Erdogan met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Sochi on September 4, 2023.

Source: [TRT World](#)

Central Asia: President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev delivered his annual State of the Nation Address on September 1, 2023. Source: [President of the Republic of Kazakhstan](#).

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

A five-member Japanese parliamentary delegation, led by Nakanishi Yusuke, director of the committee on general affairs, House of Councillors, [visited Bangladesh](#) on September 5. The delegation called on by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who offered more space to Japan in export processing zones (EPZs) for setting up industries. Japan is contributing to [infrastructure development projects](#) in Bangladesh, including a metro rail project.

Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin is visiting Jakarta from September 5-7, to participate in the 43rd ASEAN Summit and the 18th East Asia Summit. During the visit, Bangladesh and Indonesia [signed two MoUs](#) on cooperation in the energy sector and agriculture. Bangladesh also urged Indonesia to [ease the market access](#) for Bangladeshi readymade garment products in Indonesia.

India has [approved to buy 10,000 megawatts](#) of electricity from Nepal over 10 years with the endorsement of a long-term inter-government power trade agreement. The [MoU was initially signed](#) between the two countries during Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' latest visit to India in June 2023.

The interim Taliban administration of Afghanistan [signed seven mining contracts](#) worth USD 6.557 billion on August 31. The contracts were [signed in Kabul](#) between the Taliban Ministry of Mines and Petroleum and private companies from Afghanistan, Türkiye, Iran and China. They include the [extraction and processing](#) of iron ore, lead, zinc and gold in four provinces: Herat, Ghor, Logar and Takhar.

Several [demonstrations were held](#) as markets remained shuttered across Pakistan to protest against hikes in electricity bills and petroleum prices, on September 2-3. Meanwhile, the [IMF objected](#) to the government's proposal to provide relief against the inflated power bills through tariff adjustments and fuel price adjustments.

Other Developments

[BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's health has further deteriorated, with no signs of improvement.](#)

[Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's visit to Sri Lanka stands deferred to a later date due to unavoidable circumstances](#)

[INS Delhi, India's guided missile destroyer visited Sri Lanka from September 1-2.](#)

[The Government of India has increased the financial allocation for various grant projects being implemented in Sri Lanka](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The [43rd ASEAN Summit and Related Summits](#) themed "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth", chaired by Indonesia, commenced in Jakarta on September 4. At the opening ceremony, Indonesian President Jokowi Widodo urged member states "to be captains of their own ship to achieve peace, to achieve stability, to achieve prosperity together". The leaders of eight out of the ten member countries were in attendance, as the military government representatives of Myanmar were barred from the meeting. The newly appointed Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin of Thailand did not attend, and was represented by the Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sarun Charoensuwan.

The Philippines and the United States conducted a [joint sail](#) through parts of the South China Sea on September 4. It was the first time the two navies conducted a joint sail in waters west of Palawan Island, in the Philippines Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The Philippine Navy's guided missile frigate BRP Jose Rizal and the US Navy's Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Ralph Johnson participated in the exercise. "This event aims to provide an opportunity for the Philippine Navy and the US Indo-Pacific Navy to test and refine existing maritime doctrine", stated the Armed Forces of the Philippines' Western Command.

The ['2023 Standard Map'](#) released by Beijing's Ministry of Natural Resources has been contested by Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, and India. The map features a 10-dash line which includes portions of the Philippines and Malaysia's EEZ. The Malaysian Foreign Ministry stated, "[the South China Sea is a complex and sensitive](#) issue and must be handled peacefully and rationally through dialogue." The Foreign Ministry of China [responded to the criticisms](#) by countries stating that "the standard map of China is the country's normal exercise of sovereignty in accordance with the law".

Other Developments

[Singapore's Tharman Shanmugaratnam elected president after landslide victory: 'vote of optimism'](#)

[Thai king cuts ex-PM Thaksin Shinawatra's prison sentence to 1 year: 'he showed remorse'](#)

[South China Sea: Malaysia joins India in rejecting new Chinese map over land claim ahead of G20 summit](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, met with Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, in Sochi on September 4. President Erdogan stressed the need to resume the [black sea grain initiative](#) to deal with global food shortages, particularly in Africa. Russia has [suspended its participation](#) in the black sea grain initiative in July 2023 owing to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and Western sanctions.

Israel, Cyprus, and Greece held a trilateral summit in Nicosia on September 4. The three countries remain committed to [deepening their energy cooperation](#) by exploring ways to transport Eastern Mediterranean gas to Europe, which is critical for Europe's energy diversification. In order to [enhance connectivity](#) between the East Mediterranean, the Gulf, and the Indian Ocean, India could be invited to the Israel-Cyprus-Greece summit scheduled for 2024.

A report by the [International Atomic Energy Agency](#) (IAEA) indicated that Iran has slowed down the rate at which it is enriching near-weapons-grade uranium. Meanwhile, South Korea's Foreign Minister, Park Jin, informed that efforts are underway to facilitate the transfer of [Iranian funds frozen in the country](#) as a result of the US sanctions.

Israel has begun testing the '[Oron' surveillance aircraft](#), which will enable real-time monitoring of ground movements under diverse weather and visibility conditions while providing unprecedented intelligence capabilities across extensive terrain. It is also reported that Israel will conduct several [joint military exercises with the US](#) in the coming months that will focus on missile defence and coordinated attacks against Iranian nuclear facilities.

Sultan Al Neyadi, an Emirati astronaut, returned to Earth on September 5 after a six-month space mission, demonstrating the [UAE's growing interest in space exploration](#). In another development, Hong Kong's (HKSAR) [Belt and Road Summit](#) scheduled for September 2023 will feature a new session dedicated to the Middle East in line with China's plans to deepen partnerships with regional countries.

Other Developments

[Crude oil prices at 10-month high as Russia, Saudi Arabia extend supply cuts](#)

[Israel opens Bahrain Embassy, three years after normalising ties](#)

[Senior Biden adviser heading to Saudi Arabia to talk mega-deal with Palestinians](#)

China

by

Angana Guha Roy

President Xi Jinping of China has opted out of attending the upcoming [G20 summit](#) in New Delhi on September 9-10. Instead, Premier Li Qiang will represent China, according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry. While the ministry's spokesperson Mao Ning chose not to elaborate on Xi's absence, she stressed China's commitment to the G20's goals of global economic cooperation.

A day after the Chinese foreign ministry announced that Premier Li Qiang will represent China at the G20 Summit instead of President Xi Jinping, [the ministry spokesperson told reporters in Beijing](#) at a regular briefing that China always attaches high importance to the G20 grouping and actively participates in relevant activities." We support India in hosting this year's summit and stand ready to work with all parties to make the G20 Summit a success," the ministry spokesperson said.

[Italy is considering withdrawing from China's Belt and Road Initiative](#), as it says that joining BRI has failed to meet the country's expectations. Italy is the only G7 nation that is taking part in the BRI initiative. Italy's foreign minister Antonio Tajani has said that BRI has not produced the results that Italy wanted. The BRI deal will renew automatically in 2024 unless Italy withdraws by this year's end.

The [First Dhaka Elevated Expressway](#), one of Bangladesh's major flagship infrastructure projects under the Belt and Road Initiative, partly opened to traffic on September 3. The expressway, totalling 19.37 kilometres in length, was jointly invested in and built by China's Shandong Hi-Speed Group Company Ltd (SDHS), the Power Construction Corporation of China and a Thai company. Speaking at the opening of the expressway, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called it "a new milestone in Bangladesh's city mass transport system."

Kathmandu Mayor, Balendra Shah, known as Balen, has opted to [postpone his planned visit to China](#) due to his strong disapproval of China's recent map release. In a statement, Mayor Shah expressed his grievance, stating, "Nepal introduced a fresh map featuring Lipulek, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani. Yet, China's Ministry of Natural Resources recently unveiled a map of Nepal devoid of these regions, adhering to the prior map. We consider this a breach of our sovereignty, as it depicts Nepali territory as part of India without any

consultation with Nepal. Consequently, I have made the ethical choice today to cancel my five-day visit to China, which was extended as a courtesy."

Other Developments

[China's spy agency blasts US for 'engagement and containment' approach](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

During his annual [State of the Nation Address](#), President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev called for a “national referendum” regarding the country’s nuclear power development on September 1. President Tokayev argued that as the world’s largest uranium producer, Kazakhstan should have its own nuclear generation, despite safety concerns about nuclear power plants.

The [Collective Security Treaty Organisation \(CSTO\)](#) began its joint operational and strategic exercise known as Combat Brotherhood 2023 on September 1 at the Hero Brest Fortress Memorial Complex in Belarus. The six-day exercise is taking place in Belarus, the current president of the CSTO and will train collective forces with joint and special drills, including a simulated crisis in the CSTO Eastern-European collective security region. [Belarusian Defence Minister Victor Khrenin](#) said the central concept is “to find ways of counteracting the challenges and threats that may emerge in the Collective Security Treaty Organisation countries”.

On September 3, the Nagorno-Karabakh Defence Ministry stated that Azerbaijani Armed Forces [violated the ceasefire](#) in the area when Azeri forces fired small arms and AGS-17 automatic grenade launchers at a water tanker in the village of Chankatagh in Martakert.

The [Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kyrgyzstan](#) noted that unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) such as drones were handed over to the State Service on Drug Control to combat the spread of drugs on September 4. The Head of the Anti-Drug Trafficking Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, Ulanbek Sultanov, took part in a regional meeting of experts on unmanned aerial vehicles and innovative technologies in Karakol city. The [delegates](#) from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Russia and Belarus familiarised themselves with the practical use of UAVs.

Other Developments

[Turkmenistan and Germany discuss interstate cooperation](#)

[Turkmenistan deals signals new era in regional energy security](#)

[Armenians Are Facing Genocide In Nagorno Karabakh. The World Must Not Sit Idly By](#)

[Kazakhstan should not import electricity and be dependent on neighbouring countries - Tokayev](#)

[Putin's Russia scrambles to draft in mercenaries from Armenia and Kazakhstan to plug gaps in troop numbers fighting in Ukraine](#)



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