



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## India's Proximity Archives

### September 27, 2023



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**Delhi Policy Group**

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

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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, East 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:

**Southeast Asia:** External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. S. Jaishankar with the newly appointed Prime Minister of Cambodia, Hun Manet, in New York on September 24, 2023. Source: [Dr. Jaishankar/Official Twitter](#)

**East Asia:** South Korean Deputy Foreign Minister Chung Byung-won, Japanese Senior Deputy Foreign Minister Takehiro Funakoshi, and Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Nong Rong held a trilateral meeting in Seoul on September 26, 2023. Source: [Nikkei Asia](#)

**West Asia:** Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu met with US President Joe Biden in New York on September 20, 2023. Source: [Official X Handle/Benjamin Netanyahu](#)

**China:** Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal meets with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Hangzhou, China, on September 23, 2023. Source: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

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## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

The Taliban is gradually consolidating power in Afghanistan. The Interior Ministry of the Taliban is planning to implement new security strategy in the next four year. On September 25, the Taliban Interior Ministry spokesman said that they are planning to build a large-scale [camera surveillance](#) network in Afghan cities. For potential cooperation to implement the project, the Taliban consulted Chinese telecoms equipment maker Huawei. The Defence Ministry of the Taliban announced establishing more than [100 security outposts](#) on the Durand Line and investing in improving border connectivity infrastructure. Taliban spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahid said that the [formation of the councils](#) of Ulema (religious scholars) for all provinces of Afghanistan has been completed. The councils are supposed to increase coordination between the people and the Taliban interim government.

Pakistan is contemplating sending back [illegal Afghan refugees](#) residing in the country. The move could be seen in the context of ongoing tensions between the two countries. According to the media reports a circulation summary by the government approved the decision to repatriate as many as 1.1 million Afghan refugees. However, there is no official confirmation yet.

General Fayyadh Bin Hamed Al Ruwaili, Chief of General Staff (CGS) of Saudi Arabia's Armed Forces, along with a high-powered military delegation [visited Pakistan](#) on September 22. He held a meeting with Pakistan COAS General Syed Asim Munir, in which they discussed issues related to strengthening bilateral cooperation in defence and security areas. The Pakistan Navy [commissioned](#) the first MILGEM Ship PNS BABUR at the commissioning ceremony at Istanbul Naval Shipyard on September 23. The ship is delivered by [Turkish defence contractor](#) ASFAT.

### Other Developments

[EU releases USD 150 million frozen funds for Afghanistan](#)

[The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank \(AIIB\) will provide USD 4.5 billion to Bangladesh in the next five years to facilitate climate-resilient infrastructure](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

On the sidelines of the 78<sup>th</sup> session of the U.N. General Assembly, the External Affairs Minister of India, [Dr. S. Jaishankar called on Hun Manet](#), the newly appointed Prime Minister of Cambodia on September 24. At the meeting, the two countries discussed the growing partnership between India and Cambodia including the expanding defence and cultural ties between them. The two sides also exchanged views on developments in Myanmar.

The Foreign Ministers of the [United States, Japan, and the Philippines held a trilateral meeting](#) on the sidelines of the 78<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in New York, on September 22. US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, Japanese Foreign Minister, Yoko Kamikawa, and Philippine Foreign Secretary, Enrique Manalo, reinstated their commitment to promote peace and stability in the South China Sea and the East China Sea. US Department of State spokesman Matthew Miller reported from the meeting that the “three countries will continue to call out behavior that is inconsistent with international law, including the People’s Republic of China’s recent actions near Second Thomas Shoal that interfered with the Philippines’ lawful exercise of high seas freedom of navigation.”

On September 24, the Philippines shared images of the [Chinese coastguard policing a long, ball-buoy barrier](#) near the Scarborough Shoal. A day later the Philippines conducted a “special operation” to remove the floating barrier at the behest of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and his special task force on the South China Sea. The statement released by the Philippines Coast Guard stated that “the barrier posed a hazard to navigation, a clear violation of international law. It also hinders the conduct of fishing and livelihood activities of Filipino fisherfolk.”

### Other Developments

[South China Sea: Malaysia’s Anwar says Beijing gave reassurance after ‘10-dash line’ map sparked anger](#)

[South China Sea: Philippines may file case against China before international tribunal over alleged damaged corals](#)

[Thailand PM: ‘most popular’ Thaksin Shinawatra could play government role after jail release, ‘unwise’ not to tap him](#)

## East Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

Senior diplomats from South Korea, Japan, and China held a [trilateral meeting](#) in Seoul on September 26. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China described the trilateral meeting as an “in-depth discussion on promoting the stable restarting of cooperation”. The three countries agreed to hold a “trilateral summit meeting at the earliest time possible and host a trilateral ministerial meeting in preparation.” The meeting marked the resumption of three-way summits suspended since 2019 amid legal, diplomatic and trade disputes between Seoul and Tokyo.

On September 22, Taiwan reported conducting [amphibious exercises](#) in addition to drills by China. Taipei observed a rise in Chinese military activity witnessing dozens of fighters, drones, bombers, and other aircraft, as well as warships, around the island. The Defence Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng of Taiwan stated that the “recent enemy situation is quite abnormal”. China’s Foreign Ministry did not respond to questions regarding the situation.

The South Korean President [Yoon Suk-yeol in his address to the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly](#) on Sept. 20, stated that if Russia helped North Korea enhance its weapons programmes it would threaten peace and stability of the region. He stated that such an act would be deemed as a “direct provocation” and Seoul, and its allies would not stand idle. Yoon went on to condemn Russia’s actions in Ukraine stating that “it is paradoxical that a permanent member of the UN Security Council, entrusted as the ultimate guardian of world peace, would wage war by invading another sovereign nation and receive arms and ammunition from a regime that blatantly violates UN Security Council resolutions”.

On Sept. 23, Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare of Solomon Islands [denounced Japan’s release of wastewater](#) from Fukushima, concurring with China at the 78<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly. He stated that “the effect of this act is transboundary and intergenerational and is an attack on global trust and solidarity”. He urged Japan to stop its actions immediately and find alternatives for disposal.

## Other Developments

[North Korea says cooperation with Russia 'natural' for neighbors](#)

[South Korea imposes sanctions over North Korea's arms trade with countries including Russia](#)

[Japan, Vietnam celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations with rare royal visit](#)

## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On September 20, [Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu](#), met with the President of the United States, Joe Biden, in New York. The two leaders discussed the potential of the proposed economic corridor linking India, the Middle East, and Europe (IMEC), the viability of the two-state solution, upholding democratic values, and countering Iran. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and Prime Minister, [Mohammed bin Salman](#), informed that Riyadh is inching "closer" to normalising relations with Israel, but Palestine remains a significant issue. Moreover, Mohammed bin Salman warned that, if Iran obtains nuclear weapons, Saudi Arabia will also acquire nuclear weapons.

On September 26, India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, met with the UAE's Foreign Minister, [Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed](#), on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York. In addition to appreciating the rapid progress in bilateral cooperation, the two leaders exchanged perspectives on global and regional issues.

India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States (I2U2 Group) announced [a new joint space venture](#). In addition, the I2U2 [private enterprise partnership](#) portal was launched, through which private sector entities and other stakeholders can submit their projects to address the challenges facing the world in areas such as water, energy, transportation, space, health, food security, and technology.

Chinese President Xi Jinping met [Syrian President Bashar al-Assad](#) in Hangzhou on September 22, continuing China's outreach in the Middle East. The two leaders announced the establishment of the China-Syria strategic partnership, underlining their intent to intensify Belt and Road cooperation, implement the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, and Global Civilization Initiative. President Xi reiterated China's support for Syria in opposing foreign interference, rejecting unilateralism, and safeguarding national independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.



## Other Developments

[Israeli minister arrives in Saudi Arabia in first public visit](#)

[Joint Statement Following the Ministerial Meeting of the United States and the Gulf Cooperation Council \(GCC\)](#)

[Saudi Arabia praises 'positive results' of peace talks with Yemen's Houthi rebels](#)

[Saudi Foreign Minister outlines plans for better, greener Middle East](#)

## China

by

Angana Guha Roy

Prime Minister of Nepal Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' is visiting China from September 23 to 30. During the visit, he held wide-ranging talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang. As an outcome of the meetings, both sides signed [12 agreements](#), including seven MoUs, to enhance bilateral cooperation in sectors such as trade, road connectivity, and information technology. Further, the two sides also exchanged views on the ways to strengthen and consolidate mutual understanding and cooperation and give a new impetus to economy, trade and people-to-people contacts.

Sri Lankan [Foreign Minister Ali Sabry](#) clarified that Colombo has not given permission to any Chinese vessel to dock, adding that Indian security concerns are "important" for Sri Lanka. Asked about reports regarding a Chinese research vessel named Shi Yan 6 scheduled to be docked in Sri Lanka in October 2023 and India's concerns regarding it, he said that they have a standard operating procedure (SOP) and consulted many friends, including India over this issue.

China and the EU have agreed to set up a "mechanism" to [discuss export controls](#), mirroring a similar effort between Beijing and Washington, as the two trading superpowers seek to ease growing trade tensions. Beijing also agreed to buy more EU agricultural goods and resolve issues including a backlog of licenses for European infant formula makers following complaints about market barriers to its goods and services.

Chinese scientists are reportedly considering constructing [massive facilities](#) to manufacture the technology necessary to create AI semiconductor chips locally. Under the plan, particle accelerators would replace the role of the lithography machine in the steps to produce semiconductor chips for creating high-level AI systems. The reported move is attributed to a number of reasons including to reduce reliance on imports, to boost the domestic semiconductor industry, to maintain technological leadership in AI.

### Other Developments

[China's stock rises in Maldives but India's footprints are too deep to efface](#)

## Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

President of the Republic of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, concluded his official visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan on [September 25](#). During his visit, he met President Ilham Aliyev, signed an agreement on [the Kars-Nakhchivan Railway Project](#), and attended the opening of the [Nakhchivan Military Repair and Production Complex](#). The presidents of Türkiye and Azerbaijan jointly inaugurated the [Idgir-Nakhchivan Gas Pipeline](#), which will [transport natural gas](#) from Türkiye's Iğdir to Sederek in Western Azerbaijan with an annual capacity of 500 million cubic meters (mcm) and a daily capacity of 1.5 mcm.

The [11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Kazakh-Kyrgyz Intergovernmental Council](#) was held in Taraz on September 23. The main topics of the Intergovernmental Council, which was also attended by the heads of the central government agencies of the two countries, were strengthening trade and economic cooperation, cooperation in the field of water use and energy, implementation of cooperation projects in industry and agro-industrial complex, development of transit and transportation potential of the republics, joint initiatives in tourism and culture. Kazakh and Kyrgyz business leaders [signed commercial documents](#) worth nearly USD 65 million.

[On September 20](#), Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenians in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh declared a ceasefire. The authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh announced that both sides had agreed to a ceasefire mediated by Russia, with Azerbaijan claiming sovereignty over the territory. [The agreement stated](#) that Karabakh's military forces would be completely disarmed and disbanded, and the future of the region, including the ethnic Armenians, would begin on the following day. [Immediately following the ceasefire](#), Armenians in the capital city of Yerevan protested the government's handling of the conflict and accused the government of "failing to protect ethnic Armenians". Protestors called for Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's resignation, saying that "he made too many concessions in the fight for Nagorno-Karabakh and did little to help the ethnic Armenians who live there".

However, for all of Azerbaijan's promises to protect the ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, many Armenians fear for their future. [On September 24](#), Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan stated "The Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh still face the danger of ethnic cleansing". It has been reported that at least 200 ethnic Armenians died this week as the Azerbaijani military swept

further into the contested area. Moreover, by [September 25](#), out of the 120,000 ethnic Armenians of the Nagorno-Karabakh region, more than 13,000 people have crossed into Armenia.

## Other Developments

[Uzbekistan and UAE Discuss cooperation in Public Services](#)

[Kazakh President to Pay Official Visit to Germany This Week](#)

[Russia Says Armenians Added 'Fuel to Fire' in Azerbaijan Conflict](#)

[Turkmenistan increasing its revenue from gas supply via pipeline to China](#)

[Deputy Chairman of Cabinet meets executives of major Chinese companies in Beijing](#)



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