



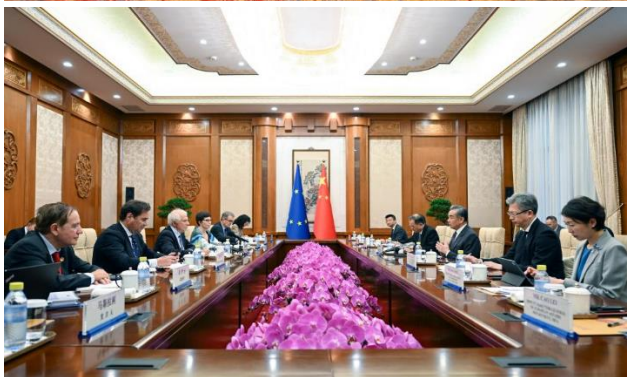
# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## India's Proximity Archives

### October 18, 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:

**South Asia:** Group picture of the 23rd Council of Ministers Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Colombo, Sri Lanka, October 11, 2023. Source: [High Commission of Sri Lanka in Malaysia](#)

**Southeast Asia:** Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of India with Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh of Vietnam in Hanoi on October 16, 2023. Source: [Dr. Jaishankar/Official Twitter](#)

**China:** Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, and Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy held the 12<sup>th</sup> round of China-EU High-level Strategic Dialogue in Beijing on October 13, 2023. Source: [Xinhua/ Zhang Ling](#)

**Central Asia:** Heads of State from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) attended the Heads of State meeting on October 13 in Kyrgyzstan. Source: [President of the Republic of Belarus](#).

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## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

The 23rd Council of Ministers Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) was held in Colombo on October 11. Senior officials from all 23 member states and 11 dialogue partners attended the meeting. The outcome of the meeting was released as '[Colombo Communiqué](#)', in which the countries "emphasised the need to strengthen the capacity of the IORA Secretariat to support Member States to address complex and multidimensional challenges in the future" and agreed to conduct further discussions on "IORA's Africa Member States and the implementation of the IORA Outlook on the Indo-Pacific". India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, in his remarks at the opening session, said, "we will continue our approach of contributing to build capacity and secure safety and security in the Indian Ocean Region, including as first responder and a [net security provider](#)".

The [ferry service](#) between Nagappatinam in India and Kankesanthurai (KKS) near Jaffna in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka commenced on October 14, 2023. The ferry service started in line with the Indian Government's priority to enhance connectivity with neighbours and in the wider Indian Ocean Region. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the launch of ferry services through a video message in which he emphasized that [partnership for progress](#) and development is one of the strongest pillars of India - Sri Lanka's bilateral relationship.

Pakistan Care Taker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar [visited China](#) to participate in the '3rd Belt and Road Forum (BRF) for International Cooperation' on October 17-18. The visit also comes against the backdrop of ongoing celebrations of the ten years of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). On the sideline of BRF, PM Kakar held a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin and discussed issues related to [bilateral ties](#) with a special focus on trade, investment, and energy.

### Other Developments

[Blast rips through Shi'ite mosque in northern Afghanistan, 17 dead](#)

[Afghanistan earthquake: Casualties over 4,000, nearly 2,000 houses destroyed](#)

[Palestine-Israel clash won't have any impact on Bangladesh: Momen](#)

[Japan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Zone to boost economy with \\$15 billion investment](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

India's Minister of External Affairs, Dr. S Jaishankar, commenced a [four-day official visit to Vietnam](#) on October 16. Dr. Jaishankar called on Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh and stated that "a stronger India-Vietnam partnership contributes to a stable, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific". He co-chaired the 18th India-Vietnam Joint Commission meeting with his Vietnamese counterpart, Bui Thanh Son. The two sides discussed cooperation in political, defence and maritime security, judicial, trade and investment, energy, development, education and training, science and technology, and cultural domains.

Thailand's new Prime Minister, Srettha Thavisin, made his [first official visit to Singapore](#) on October 12. During his visit, the Thai PM met with President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and met Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore. They noted the 'multi-faceted' relationship shared by Thailand and Singapore and discussed potential areas to deepen cooperation such as renewable energy, the digital economy, fintech, and combating cybercrimes.

Japan, the US, and the European Union are conducting a [five-day cyber security training](#) with engineers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations countries and India. The exercise aims at bolstering the cyber defences of participating governments to prevent attacks from spreading globally. Infrastructure engineers from Bangladesh and Taiwan were also among the participants.

### Other Developments

[South China Sea: In U-turn, Philippine navy acknowledges gunboat presence near disputed Scarborough Shoal](#)

[Myanmar steps up corruption crackdown amid economic pressure](#)

[Indonesia court clears way for Jokowi's son to run in election; President says he is not interfering](#)

## East Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

The White House has accused the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of supplying Russia with weapons in a recent shipment. According to the [National Security Council spokesman John Kirby](#), "as many as 1000 containers with equipment and munitions have been provided in recent weeks" to Russia for use in the war in Ukraine. The White House also released overhead imagery showing what it said were approximately 300 containers assembled in Najin, North Korea and then shipped by sea and rail to an ammunition depot located in southwestern Russia, near Tikhoretsk, which is about 180 miles away from the Ukrainian border.

On October 17, [the biennial Seoul International Aerospace and Defence Exhibition \(ADEX\)](#) began in South Korea at Seoul Air Base. It is one of the largest-ever defence exhibitions of its kind in the region, showcasing the latest technologies and products in the fields of aviation, space, and military. [The organisers stated](#) that this year, there will be more companies than ever, with more than 450 senior defence officials from 54 countries and hundreds of thousands of other professionals and members of the public. Additionally, there will be a rare appearance of a US nuclear-capable bomber. Lee Jong-ho, Chief of the Organising office stated, that "this year's show is designed to help South Korea reach its goal of becoming the world's fourth-largest arms exporter".

The US nuclear-powered Ronald Reagan and its strike group arrived in the South Korean port of Busan for [a five-day visit](#) on October 12. The spokesperson of the carrier strike group stated the visit as an "opportunity to build interoperability at sea together towards shared goals of a free and open Indo-Pacific". North Korea has denounced the arrival of the US aircraft carrier as a 'rehearsal for invasion'. North Korea's official KCNA news stated this is an "undisguised military provocation driving the situation to irrevocable catastrophic circumstances".

### Other Developments

[South Korea, Japan And U.S. Set Up Three-Way Security Hotline](#)

[IMF sees no conditions for Japan to intervene in currency market](#)

[North Korea Accuses US Of Inciting Tension With 'Nuclear Supremacy'](#)



## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

In the midst of the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, India launched '[Operation Ajay](#)' on October 11 to facilitate the return of its citizens. India called for the resumption of direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine aimed at establishing a sovereign, independent, and [viable Palestinian state](#). China also urged restraint from all parties, a ceasefire, and international efforts to [achieve a two-state solution](#).

Chancellor Olaf Scholz and President Biden arrived in Israel on October 17-18 respectively demonstrating Germany and the US's [steadfast support for Israel](#). President Biden called for the [elimination of Hamas](#) but emphasized the importance of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and a path leading to the establishment of a Palestinian State. Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, described [Hamas as the "new Nazis"](#) calling on the world to unite in defeating this terrorist group.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has called for an immediate ceasefire and an [end to the Israeli siege of Gaza](#). Moreover, the GCC has announced the provision of USD 100 million in humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Gaza. A meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is scheduled for October 18 in Saudi Arabia to address the [dire humanitarian situation in Gaza](#) as well as the escalating military conflict between Israel and Hamas. Earlier, US Secretary of State Blinken visited Jordan, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt to exchange views on [preventing further escalation of conflict in Gaza](#).

The conflict has also escalated on Israel's northern border with Lebanon, where five militants from [Lebanon's Iranian-backed Hezbollah group](#) were killed during an operation against Israeli forces on October 17.

### Other Developments

[Gaza's dire humanitarian crisis explained](#)

[Israel, Hamas Trade Blame After 500 Killed At Gaza Hospital: 10 Facts](#)

[Lebanon-Israel border clashes escalate, 5 Hezbollah fighters killed](#)

## China

by

Angana Guha Roy

The [20th round of India-China Corps Commander Level Meeting](#) was held at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Indian side on October 9-10. The two sides exchanged views in a frank, open and constructive manner for an early and mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues along the LAC in the Western Sector, and building on the progress made in the last round of Corps Commanders' Meeting held on August 13-14. They agreed to maintain the momentum of dialogue and negotiations through the relevant military and diplomatic mechanisms. They also committed to maintaining peace and tranquillity on the ground in the border areas in the interim.

[Xu Xueyuan, deputy chief of mission of the Chinese Embassy in the US](#) during an annual gathering of the Institute for China-America Studies said that, China welcomes a summit between President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco in November 2023, but this can take place only if it feels respected by the American side, noting that the US needs to show consideration for four areas bearing on China's "core interests", (1) Taiwan, (2) democracy and human rights, (3) China's path to development and its political and economic system, and (4) China's right to development.

The [Biden administration has decided to halt shipments to China](#) of more advanced artificial intelligence chips designed by Nvidia and others, part of a suite of measures aimed at stopping Beijing from getting cutting-edge U.S. technologies to strengthen its military. The goal is to limit China's access to "advanced semiconductors that could fuel breakthroughs in artificial intelligence and sophisticated computers that are critical to (Chinese) military applications," Commerce Department Secretary Gina Raimondo said.

The European Union's top diplomat Josep Borrell during his Beijing visit said [Brussels takes China seriously and expects the same in return](#) on geopolitical issues and trade. "Europe takes China very, very seriously...We also expect to be considered not through the lens of our relationship with others, but in ourselves...Since the war in Ukraine, Europe has become a geopolitical power...We want to talk to China with this approach" Borrell said.



## Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [October 12](#), Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Kyrgyzstan to attend the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). This marked his first visit abroad since the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for war crime allegations in March 2023. The [annual Council of Heads of State of the CIS](#) was held the following day in Bishkek, with leaders of Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan [declined to attend](#) the Summit, citing "a number of circumstances" in a telephonic conversation with the President of Kyrgyzstan.

During the initial [limited format meeting of the CIS Heads of State meeting](#), President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev called for continued active cooperation in the CIS format aimed at overcoming emerging challenges, looking for new areas to strengthen successful cooperation. The Heads of State agreed that there should be an emphasis placed on eliminating trade barriers, creating favourable tariff conditions, and simplifying administrative procedures. President Tokayev suggested that developing transport corridors in the Commonwealth space would be beneficial for such.

On [October 17](#), President Xi Jinping met with the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, who was in China to attend the third 'Belt and Road' International Cooperation Summit Forum, which is taking place from October 17 to 18. During the meeting, Xi Jinping highlighted the importance of Kazakhstan for China by expressing that "10 years ago, I first proposed the initiative of jointly building the 'Silk Road Economic Belt' in Kazakhstan", which was acknowledged by President Tokayev. The two heads of state jointly witnessed the signing of [several bilateral cooperation documents](#), like the agreement on the development of the Trans-Caspian international transport route, and an MoU on the joint development of cooperation on the construction project of the Tacheng-Ayagoz railway.

## Other Developments

[China, Turkmenistan pledge enhanced energy cooperation](#)

[Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Iran Forge Ahead With Proposed Transit Corridor](#)  
[Delegations of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan hold border talks in Busto](#)

[Russia hands over MI-8 Helicopters to Ministry of Emergency Situations of Kyrgyzstan](#)



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