



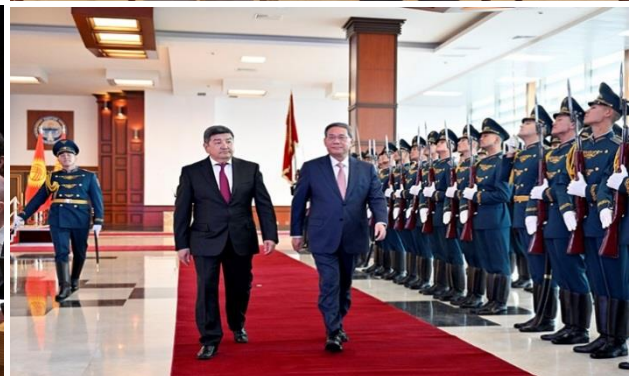
# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## India's Proximity Archives

October 25, 2023



Volume I, Issue 43 | October 25, 2023

**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:** President Xi Jinping held a meeting with Caretaker Prime Minister of Pakistan Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in Beijing on October 19, 2023. Source: [MOFA PRC](#)

**Southeast Asia:** Dr. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India, with Mr. Lawrence Wong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance of Singapore in Singapore on October 20, 2023. (Source: [Dr. Jaishankar/Official Twitter](#))

**West Asia:** US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, addressed the UN Security Council Ministerial Meeting on the Situation in the Middle East on October 24, 2023. Source: [Official X Handle/Secretary Antony Blinken](#)

**Central Asia:** Kyrgyz Prime Minister Akyzbek Japarov held a grand welcome ceremony for Li Qiang when he arrived in Kyrgyzstan on October 24, 2023. Source: [The State Council of the People's Republic of China](#)

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## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

On October 19, Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar held a meeting with Chinese President [Xi Jinping](#) on the sidelines of the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF). During the meeting, President Xi Jinping appreciated "Pakistan's firm support for China's core interests." In a bilateral meeting on October 18, PM Kakar and Li Qiang, Premier of China, [agreed to expand](#) the scope of the CPEC infrastructure projects diversifying in areas like industrial development, ICT, livelihood projects, mining and mineral exploration, and agriculture.

After four years in self-imposed exile, PML-N leader and former Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif returned to the country on October 21. Upon his arrival, he [secured bail](#) from the accountability court where he was convicted in two corruption cases filed by NAB. PML-N being a major ruling party is coming under pressure from the opposition as well as allied parties for early conduct of [national elections](#). The Supreme Court also issued notices to the Election Commission of Pakistan and the federal government on October 23 on a set of petitions calling for [holding elections](#) within 90 days after the dissolution of the National Assembly and the provincial legislatures.

The Acting Commerce Minister of the Taliban said that Afghanistan wants to [formally join BRI](#) and will send a technical team to China for talks.

### Other Developments

[Pakistan deports 60,000 Afghans in less than one month](#)

[Tajikistan' President unveils 24 new border posts along Afghanistan border](#)

[JICA signs loan agreement for Mirsharai Steel Plant Development Project in Bangladesh co-financing with India Exim Bank](#)

[Indian Navy's Advanced Light Helicopter \(ALH\), arrived at Sri Lanka Air Force base Katunayake for training of Sri Lanka Air Force \(SLAF\) Pilots and Sri Lanka Navy ships for shipborne helicopter operations on October 19.](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. Jaishankar, made an [official visit to Singapore](#) from October 18-21. He paid a courtesy call to the newly elected President of Singapore, Mr. Tharman Shanmugaratnam. During the meeting with Mr. Lawrence Wong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance of Singapore, the two sides discussed ways to enhance engagement in fintech, digitalization, green economy, skills development and food security. Dr. Jaishankar chaired the [Regional Conference of India's ASEAN and East Asia Ambassadors](#), where they assessed the implications of regional developments on India.

The [first ASEAN-Gulf Cooperation Council \(GCC\) Summit](#) was convened in Riyadh on October 20. The leaders adopted a new cooperation plan between 2024 and 2028, covering a range of fields from trade to climate change. The joint statement urged for a "peaceful resolution to the conflict" with a view toward a two-state solution and condemned "all attacks against civilians".

On October 23, the Philippines accused the Chinese Coast Guard of ["intentionally colliding"](#) with its vessel on a resupply mission near the Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea. In another incident on the same day, the Philippines accused China's coast guard of "dangerous blocking manoeuvres" that caused it to collide with a Philippine resupply boat about 25km from Second Thomas Shoal. The Chinese embassy in Manila lodged protests against the "trespassing" of the Philippines vessel and called on the Philippines government to stop "causing trouble and provocation" at sea. The Philippines foreign ministry [summoned Chinese Ambassador](#) Huang Xilian to "condemn the reckless and illegal act of the Chinese government."

### Other Developments

[Deals worth over \\$4bn inked with Saudi Arabia, Philippines says](#)

[Thai PM Srettha Thavasin's pick of frigate from 'elder brother' China over submarine sparks probe into deal](#)

## East Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The [first US-Japan-South Korea trilateral aerial exercise](#) was conducted near the Korean Peninsula on October 22. The exercise involved the South Korean Air Force, Japan's Air Self-Defense Force, and the U.S. Air Force, including a U.S. B-52 strategic bomber. The exercise was "planned to expand the three countries' response capabilities against North Korea's growing nuclear and missile threats," according to the official statement.

Russian Foreign Minister [Sergei Lavrov arrived in Pyongyang](#) for a two-day official visit on October 18. During his visit, Mr. Lavrov met North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Choe Son Hui, Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Korea. The two sides discussed ways to expand bilateral ties in all areas, "resuming full-fledged contacts" and intensifying economic cooperation. The Russian Minister thanked North Korea for backing Russia's actions in Ukraine and pledged Moscow's "complete support and solidarity" with North Korea.

[North Korea condemned the USA](#) for supplying long-range ballistic missiles known as ATACMS to Ukraine on October 21. North Korea's ambassador to Russia stated that these missiles "will serve as a catalyst for putting the whole of Europe into the crucible of endless war and prolonging the war". This comes after the US criticized North Korea for providing Russia with a shipment of weapons characterizing it as a "troubling development".

### Other Developments

[Japan invites Australia to join two military exercises for first time](#)

[Taiwan reports 13 Chinese air force planes in its air defence zone](#)

## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, in a telephone conversation with the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, condemned the [attack on Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza](#) on October 18. PM Modi reiterated India's concerns about terrorism, violence, and the deteriorating [security situation in West Asia](#). India has sent [humanitarian aid to Palestine](#), including medical supplies and disaster relief materials. Meanwhile, India's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, met Saudi Arabia's Minister of Investment, Khalid Al-Falih in Riyadh to [discuss investment opportunities](#) that would further enhance the strategic partnership between the two countries.

On October 24, US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, addressed the [UN Security Council Ministerial Meeting](#) on the Situation in the Middle East. As part of his remarks, Secretary Blinken reaffirmed Israel's right to defend itself and discussed efforts to ensure the release of hostages taken by Hamas and to enhance humanitarian support for Gaza. Meanwhile, French President Emmanuel Macron called for the [expansion of the coalition against ISIS](#) to include Hamas during his visit to Israel on October 24.

On October 23, [China and the Gulf Cooperation Council](#) (GCC) held a meeting of their economic and trade ministers in Guangzhou. The parties agreed to align the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with the development strategies of Gulf countries and to expand cooperation in areas such as the digital economy, sustainable development, and infrastructure.

### Other Developments

[Cairo Peace Summit ends without Gaza breakthrough](#)

[U.S. Advises Israel to Delay Gaza Invasion, Officials Say](#)

[Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal to attend 7th 'Future Investment Initiative' in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia](#)

[China-GCC synergy crucial for Middle East development](#)



## China

by

Angana Guha Roy

[The Belt and Road CEO Conference concluded on October 22](#). A significant number of cooperation projects, involving nearly 300 Chinese and international partners, were inked during the conference. The cooperation projects involved various industries, including infrastructure, clean energy, artificial intelligence, biopharmaceuticals, financial services, modern agriculture and rail transportation. India boycotted the summit citing sovereignty issues in the controversial CPEC and the financial viability of Beijing's projects in smaller countries.

China has increased its military presence and infrastructure along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) following the Galwan Valley clashes in June 2020, [according to a recent Pentagon report](#). The US Department of Defense's annual report to Congress indicates that this trend is likely to continue through 2023.

[Bhutanese Foreign Minister Thandi Dorji called on Chinese Vice President Han Zheng in Beijing](#) on October 23. He had a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on October 22. The back-to-back meetings focused on the demarcation of the boundary between Bhutan and China and establishing formal diplomatic relations between the two." The conclusion of boundary negotiations and the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Bhutan fully serve the long-term and fundamental interests of the country and nation of Bhutan. China is ready to work with Bhutan in the same direction, seize the historic opportunity, complete this important process as soon as possible, and fix and develop China-Bhutan friendly relations in legal form," a statement put out by the Chinese foreign ministry said.

[During Mr. Wickremesinghe's visit to Beijing for the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation](#) from October 16-20, President Xi said China would work with Sri Lanka to "jointly promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation" and push for new progress in "developing China-Sri Lanka strategic cooperative partnership featuring sincere mutual assistance and lasting friendship." The two sides pledged greater collaboration on international and regional affairs, oppose politicisation of the human rights issue and bloc confrontation, and safeguard the common interests of the two countries and developing countries, the official Chinese statement said. China has also expressed willingness to increase its imports from Sri Lanka and



promote more Chinese investment in the island nation, statements issued by both sides said.

### **Other Developments**

[New Maldives president wants 'every single Indian military personnel' removed from his country](#)

## Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

Kyrgyzstan is set to host three crucial meetings this week. The [Commonwealth Independent States \(CIS\) Council of Heads of Government](#) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Council of Heads of Government will convene on October 26, with Kyrgyzstan as the Chair. The following day, the Eurasian Economic Union Intergovernmental Council will gather to discuss vital issues. Chinese Premier [Li Qiang arrived](#) in Kyrgyzstan on October 24 to attend the SCO meeting and pay an official visit.

During a press briefing with Kyrgyz Prime Minister Akyzbek Japarov at the airport, Chinese Premier, [Li Qiang stated](#), "China is ready to work with Kyrgyzstan to fully implement the important consensus reached the two heads of states, deepen political and strategic mutual trust, create more new highlights and new benchmarks for cooperation, and enrich the China-Kyrgyzstan friendship with more connotation of the times.

The [19<sup>th</sup> European Union – Central Asia Ministerial meeting](#) was held in Luxemburg on October 23. The Foreign Ministers of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan Uzbekistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and of the European Union's (EU) Member States, as well as the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission and the European Commissioner for International Partnerships attended the historic meeting. During the meeting, participants discussed ways to advance inter-regional cooperation on common security challenges, connectivity, economic and trade, environment and climate, and people-to-people contacts, promoting deeper ties between the EU and Central Asia. Following the meeting, a [Joint Communiqué](#) was published.

On October 19, Chinese President Xi Jinping called for [enhancing the China-Turkmenistan comprehensive strategic partnership](#), saying it serves the two countries' fundamental interests and the two peoples' shared aspirations. President Xi said China will continue to work with Turkmenistan to push for sustained steady growth of bilateral relations during his meeting with Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, chairman of the People's Council of Turkmenistan, who was in Beijing for the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF). He further stated that China is willing to strengthen the alignment between the Belt and Road Initiative and Turkmenistan's development strategy to revive the Great Silk Road.

The meetings of the [Commonwealth Independent States \(CIS\) Council of Heads of Government](#) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Council of Heads of Government will be held on October 26 under the chairmanship of Kyrgyzstan. Deputy Director of the Department of Economic Diplomacy Zhyldyz Kozhobekova stated that the following day, a meeting of the Eurasian Economic Union Intergovernmental Council will be held.

## Other Developments

[Turkmenistan and Türkiye discuss Interstate Relations](#)

[Azerbaijan holds first joint drills with Turkey since Karabakh victor](#)

[Cabinet Chairman Japarov receives SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming](#)

[France sends weapons to Armenia amid fears of new conflict with Azerbaijan](#)



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