



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives

November 1, 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.

Cover Image:

South Asia: *Nepal Foreign Minister NP Saud held a bilateral meeting with the US Secretary of State Antony J Blinken in Washington, on October 30, 2023. Source: [X/ @nepalembassyusa](https://twitter.com/nepalembassyusa).*

Southeast Asia: *Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim at the end of the two-day leaders retreat in Singapore on October 31, 2023. (Source: [PM Lee/Official Twitter](#))*

China: *Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Washington on a three day trip from October 26-28. During his visit, Wang Yi, called on US President Biden, and met Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Adviser, Jake Sullivan. Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Peoples' Republic of China](#)*

Central Asia: *The 22nd meeting of the Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) on October 26, 2023. Source: [Government of the Kyrgyz Republic](#)*

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

The Bangladesh government [deployed paramilitary](#) troops nationwide in view of a three-day nationwide transport blockade called by the main opposition BNP, which began on October 31. Multiple deaths have been reported during clashes between police and BNP supporters [across the country](#). The blockade aims to pressure the Awami League Government to stepdown ahead of a neutral administration-led election in January 2024. Bangladesh's Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen [held a meeting](#) with foreign diplomats and officials from the UN and other international agencies on October 30, during which he conveyed that "BNP has a long history of violence and vandalism, and they are doing it again". The BNP [sent a letter](#) to embassies and high commissions in Dhaka, blaming the government and the police for the incidents of violence.

The [deadline set by the Pakistani government](#) for illegal refugees to leave the country expired on October 31. Nearly 100,000 illegal Afghan immigrants have voluntarily gone back to their country from the Torkham and Chaman border crossings over the past month. Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti warned of strict action if any Pakistanis were found providing shelter to undocumented immigrants, including Afghans. The UN OHCHR [called on the Pakistani government](#) to "suspend forcible returns of Afghan nationals before it is too late to avoid a human rights catastrophe".

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal NP Saud held a [bilateral meeting](#) with the US Secretary of State Antony J Blinken in Washington, on October 30. During the meeting, Foreign Minister Saud highlighted the development priorities of Nepal in the context of the country's graduation from the least developed country group and called for enhanced support from the United States in the areas of trade and investment, market access, food security, and IT sector, among others. He requested the United States for reauthorization and expansion of the Nepal Trade Preference Program (NTPP) and GSP privilege by adding new exportable items of interest for Nepal.

Other Developments

[Sri Lanka is set to enter its 12th round of negotiations on the proposed Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement \(ETCA\) with India.](#)

[Myanmar seeking to repatriate Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh](#)

[The UN Special Rapporteur for Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, said the recognition of women's rights by the interim government officials in Afghanistan would help towards greater legitimacy for the interim government.](#)

[Pakistan violates ceasefire along international border in Jammu and Kashmir](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim concluded a [two-day leaders' retreat](#) on October 31. They concluded agreements in various fields, including SME development, intellectual property rights and tackling cross-border crime. PM Anwar stated that "the commitment is unprecedented in terms of enhancing the level of working relations between Malaysia and Singapore". They further agreed to jointly develop the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-EEZ) to enhance the "cross-border flow of goods and people and strengthen the business ecosystem".

China's Minister of Public Security, Mr. [Wang Xiaohong, arrived in Naypyidaw](#), Myanmar on October 30. This comes after three ethnic rebel groups launched coordinated attacks in north-eastern Myanmar, seeking to take control of towns. Since the attacks, thousands have reportedly been displaced, with some crossing into China. Mr Wang Xiaohong met the junta's home minister Lieutenant-General Yar Pyae and discussed "peace and tranquillity in border areas of the two countries" and cooperation on law enforcement and security.

Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim has stated that the [US tried to pressure Malaysia](#) over its stance on the Palestine-Israel conflict. Since the start of the conflict, Malaysia has refused to condemn Hamas' actions and condemn Israel's unlawful occupation of Palestine. He informed the media that "Malaysia received a demarche from the US Embassy twice, on Oct 13 and Oct 30, where Malaysia was asked to use diplomatic channels to urge a country to not take advantage of the conflict by using a proxy to get involved in the Gaza conflict". He added the Malaysian envoy to the US was called in by the American authorities to question him about Malaysia's stance on the conflict.

Other Developments

[Thai foreign minister travels to Qatar, Egypt for Hamas hostage talks](#)

[Philippines drops China railway deals, seeks other funders](#)

East Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The United States and South Korea commenced [joint air drills](#) on October 30. The annual drill 'Vigilant Defence' will involve 130 warplanes from both countries to simulate 24-hour wartime operations. The drills aim at enhancing interoperability between the two militaries by performing air-to-surface live fire drills, defensive counter air operations and other emergency training. South Korea's military stated that the drills will help the country maintain combat readiness "to respond to and strongly punish any provocation by the enemy through an intense training simulating an actual situation".

The [10th Beijing Xiangshan Forum](#), China's biggest annual show of military diplomacy, kicked off on October 30 without its defence minister, who typically hosts this event. During the speeches of the Chinese and Russian military officials, the United States was criticised and referred to as an "agent of global instability". Russian Defence Minister General of the Army, [Sergei Shoigu](#), said the US "has focused their military and political resources on the task of preserving its elusive global dominance by any means necessary". Similarly, [Zhang Youxia](#), Vice Chairman of China's Central Military Commission, in his keynote address, referring to the United States, said, "Some countries deliberately create turbulence and interference in other countries' internal affairs".

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida were honoured with the special International Profile in Courage Award from the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation for [improving relations](#) between the two countries despite historical issues and domestic opposition on October 29. In a pre-recorded acceptance speech, Yoon said, "I know that this award is a reminder of my solemn duty – a profound sense of responsibility placed upon the Republic of Korea, the United States and Japan to promote freedom and prosperity around the world by standing together in solidarity".

Other Developments

[US Raises North Korea's 'Destabilising' Acts in Talks with China](#)

[North Korea exports weapons to Hamas, says senior official with Joint Chiefs of Staff in Seoul.](#)

[US Needs 'Strategic Clarity' On North Korea Deterrence: RAND Report](#)

[Japan sanctions individuals, company over links to Hamas](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

A [Qatari court](#) has imposed the death penalty on eight former Indian Navy personnel who were detained in Qatar in 2022, without publicly specifying the reason for their detention. On October 30, India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, spoke with the families of the Indians detained in Qatar. He assured them that the government considers this case a matter of the highest priority and has assigned officials to take all necessary steps to secure their release.

Meanwhile, on October 27, India abstained from voting on a [resolution of the United Nations General Assembly](#) (UNGA) calling for an "immediate, durable, and sustained humanitarian truce" between Israel and Hamas militants in Gaza. UNGA adopted the non-binding resolution with 120 votes in favour, 14 against, and 45 abstentions.

On October 28, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, announced that Israel would expand its [ground offensive into Gaza](#) to destroy Hamas. Saudi Arabia, on its part, denounced any ground operation carried out by Israel as it would pose a [threat to civilians in Gaza](#).

Secretary Blinken is scheduled to visit Israel on November 3. A revitalized [Palestinian Authority](#) (PA) should retake control of Gaza if Israel is successful in toppling Hamas, Blinken said during his testimony before the Senate Appropriations Committee on October 31. The Palestinian Authority was expelled from Gaza in 2007 as a result of clashes between Hamas and the PA.

Other Developments

[Why did India refuse to back UNGA resolution on Israel-Gaza crisis? Explained](#)

['India, UAE can broaden economic ties'](#)

China

by

Angana Guha Roy

The latest [Chinese foreign policy document](#), emphasising the importance of improving relations with neighbouring countries, only mentioned India as a footnote. India was listed along with 27 other countries that have established partnerships and cooperation with China. This underscores the low priority China accords in improving bilateral relations.

[Chinese Survey and Research Vessel Shi Yan 6 docked at Sri Lanka's Colombo port on October 25](#), despite India's objections. The vessel is slated to conduct a maritime survey in the Sri Lankan Exclusive Economic Zone with Sri Lanka's National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA). In August, a PLA warship, Hai Yang 24 Hao, had also docked at Colombo port for what was described as a formal port call.

[The first-ever visit to China by Bhutanese Foreign Minister Thandi Dorji in October 2023](#) paved the way for the 25th round of boundary talks leading to the signing of a Cooperation Agreement on the "Responsibilities and Functions of the Joint Technical Team (JTT) on the Delimitation and Demarcation of the Bhutan-China Boundary." This advances their 3-Step Roadmap initiated in 2021 for border resolution, building on the positive momentum since their last talks in 2016. The 3-Step Roadmap involves first agreeing to the border "on the table," then visiting the sites on the ground; and then formally demarcating the boundary.

[Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Washington](#) on a three-day trip from October 26-28. During his visit, Wang Yi called on US President Biden and met Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Adviser, Jake Sullivan. The statement released by the White House, highlighted that President Biden told Wang Yi that the US and China "need to manage competition in the relationship responsibly and maintain open lines of communication" and "work together to address global challenges." A summary of Mr. Sullivan's meeting said that the two officials held "candid, constructive and substantive discussions" on issues such as the Israel-Hamas conflict, Ukraine, and Taiwan.

Other Developments

[Li Keqiang: Ex-Chinese premier sidelined by Xi dies at 68](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On October 26, Kyrgyzstan hosted the [22nd meeting of the Heads of Government \(Prime Ministers\) Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation \(SCO\)](#). The Indian delegation was led by the Minister of External Affairs, Dr. S. Jaishankar. The leaders discussed various issues, including trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation within the SCO. Their [joint communique](#) underlined the necessity for a new initiative to promote cooperation in establishing a new type of international relations that upholds the values of mutual respect, justice, equality, and mutually beneficial cooperation.

President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov and the President of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, held [summit talks](#) in Ankara at the Aksaray Palace on October 26. Following an official welcoming ceremony, the two leaders engaged in one-on-one negotiations at the highest level. President Erdogan expressed his belief that the visit of the Turkmenistan head to Turkey was a significant event in the history of the two countries' dialogue, which has long been based on good traditions. The leaders also highlighted that by collaborating closely on the global stage, Turkmenistan and Turkey share "similar or largely similar positions" on current regional and global issues.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance of Uzbekistan, [Jamshid Kuchkarov, called for peace and stability in Afghanistan](#), saying it is essential for the region, and he pledged that his country will cooperate in the transit, trade and agriculture sectors of Afghanistan. Deputy Prime Minister Kuchkarov arrived in Afghanistan on October 29 and met with several officials of the Islamic Emirate, including the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and the acting Minister of Industry and Commerce.

Minister Mullah Baradar said, "the visits of the senior delegation shows that the contacts between the two sides are strengthening. We hope we have good improvements in this meeting, particularly in the field of trade and transit. The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry urged the officials of the two countries to boost facilities for the traders on the two sides. Another minister within [the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry stated](#), "there was no security before in Afghanistan. There was only poppy cultivation... Afghanistan is now a good field for investment".

Other Developments

[Registered Human Trafficking Cases Double In Tajikistan](#)

[Türkiye wants Turkmenistan to become full member in Organisation of Turkic States \(OTS\)](#)

[Presidents of Turkmenistan and Türkiye exchanged Turkmen Alabai and Turkish Kangal puppies](#)

[Airport Assault: Turkmen Students Returning From Russia Immediately Forced Into The Army](#)



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