



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## India's Proximity Archives

July 17, 2024



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Delhi Policy Group

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

[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://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, East Asia, Southeast Asia, West Asia, Central Asia and Indian Ocean Region of strategic relevance to India, compiled from open-source media. The research team includes Shreyas Deshmukh, Sanket Joshi, Anshita Shukla, Jayantika Rao T.V, and Divya Rai, 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:** KP Sharma Oli was sworn in as Prime Minister of Nepal on July 15, 2024. Source: [MSN](#)

**Southeast Asia:** External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. S. Jaishankar with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, Maris Sangiampongsa in New Delhi on July 12, 2024. Source: [Dr. Jaishankar/Official X Account](#)

**East Asia:** US President Joe Biden with leaders of NATO's Indo-Pacific Partners on the sidelines of the NATO Summit in Washington on July 11, 2024. Source: [Prime Minister's Office of Japan/Official Website](#)

**Indian Ocean Region:** On July 12, Indian Navy ships INS Aditya and INS Visakhapatnam undertook Maritime Partnership Exercise MPX with the US Naval Carrier Strike Group in the Arabian Sea. Source: [US Navy](#)

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## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

KP Sharma Oli was sworn in as the [Prime Minister of Nepal](#) on July 15, inducting a [22-member Cabinet](#) including two Deputy Prime Ministers. Oli had [submitted signatures of 165 lawmakers](#) in his support (Nepali Congress Party's 88 and UML's 77) to President Paudel, more than the majority mark in the 275-member House of Representatives. Prime Minister Narendra Modi [congratulated KP Sharma Oli](#) on his appointment, saying he looked forward to expanding mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.

The 8th Deputy National Security Adviser (DNSA) level meeting of the [Colombo Security Conclave](#) (CSC) was hosted virtually by Mauritius on July 10. India, Mauritius, Maldives, and Sri Lanka welcomed Bangladesh as the fifth Member State of the CSC. Seychelles participated as an Observer State. Member States reviewed the decisions taken at the 7th DNSA level meeting held on July 12, 2023 and the 6th NSA level Meeting on December 7-8, 2023 and the progress of activities under the Roadmap of Activities for 2023-2024 of the CSC.

Six people including three students were killed and scores injured across Bangladesh on July 16 as government supporters and police firing tear gas clashed with students protesting against a [quota system](#) for government jobs. Following the ongoing protests earlier on July 10, Bangladesh's Supreme Court [temporarily suspended quotas](#) for coveted government jobs. In a move to maintain public order, the Bangladeshi government has ordered the indefinite [closure of all schools](#) and colleges across the country.

### Other Developments

[Pakistan to ban Imran Khan's party, file treason case against ex-PM](#)

[Terror groups operating out of Afghanistan pose significant threat, UN report says](#)

[Pakistan says registered Afghan refugees can stay for one more year](#)

[Bangladesh and China sign 21 agreements, MoU as PM Sheikh Hasina meets President Xi Jinping](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, Maris Sangiampongsa, made [his first official visit to India](#) for the 2nd BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat in New Delhi from July 11-13, 2024. During the visit, he held a bilateral meeting with External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. S. Jaishankar. The two ministers reviewed progress across various areas of partnership covering political exchanges, defence and security ties, trade and investment opportunities, connectivity, science and technology collaboration, health cooperation, culture and people-to-people interaction.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Myanmar, U Than Swe made an [official visit to New Delhi](#) for the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat on July 9, 2024. He held a meeting with Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India. The two leaders discussed issues of mutual concern - illegal narcotics, arms trade and activities of insurgent groups, border stability and flow of displaced persons. Dr. Jaishankar reiterated India's support for the return of democracy to Myanmar and its commitment to engage with all stakeholders in that regard.

The eighth anniversary of the award issued by the tribunal constituted under Annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in the arbitration instituted by the Republic of the Philippines against the People's Republic of China concerning the South China Sea was observed on July 12. On the occasion, the [European Union \(EU\) Spokesperson](#) reaffirmed the EU's support for the Philippines and upheld the 2016 Arbitral Award as legally binding. [China retaliated](#) by stating "strong dissatisfaction with firm opposition to this [call] and has lodged solemn representations with the EU," the mission said.

### Other Developments

[U.S. approaches Indonesia to join Mineral Security Partnership](#)

[U.S. Navy visits former base in Vietnam's strategic Cam Ranh Bay](#)

## East Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

After months of unexplained delays, China's Communist Party commenced the third plenum to review a plan intended to shake the world's second-biggest economy out of its malaise on [July 15](#). Third plenums are closely watched due to their historical impact on economic reforms. The [closed-door meeting](#) will last for four days and aims to set the economic policy direction for the next five years and beyond. On the economic front, plenums are an opportunity to communicate China's strategic objectives to the world. While an official communique will be released a day after the meeting concludes, many analysts suggest that it will lay out a "[strategy for self-sufficient economic growth](#) in an era of heightened national security concerns and restriction on access to American technology".

The South Korean President, Yoon Suk Yeol, [held a meeting with US President Joe Biden](#) on the sidelines of the NATO Summit in Washington on July 11, 2024. The US reaffirmed its commitment to extended deterrence to the Republic of Korea, backed by the full range of U.S. capabilities, including nuclear weapons. A day before the bilateral leaders meeting, the U.S. Department of Defence and the ROK Ministry of National Defence signed the U.S.-ROK Guidelines for Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Operations on the Korean Peninsula ("Guidelines document").

US President Biden held a meeting with [NATO's Indo-Pacific Partners](#), on the margin of the NATO Summit in Washington on July 11, 2024. He met with President Yoon Suk Yeol of the Republic of Korea, Prime Minister Kishida Fumio of Japan, Prime Minister Christopher Luxon of New Zealand, and Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles of Australia. The leaders reiterated their strong condemnation of Russia's war against Ukraine and reaffirmed their commitment to continue to support Ukraine in its self-defence. They welcomed four new flagship projects between NATO and its Indo-Pacific Partners, focused on support to Ukraine; cyber defence; exchanging information on the challenges posed by disinformation; and artificial intelligence.

## Other Developments

[Japan To Help Ukraine Improve Laws To Support Reconstruction](#)

[China's Tibet Policy Under Brighter Spotlight After U.S. Law, U.N. Review](#)

[China, Russia Start Joint Naval Drills, Days After NATO Allies Called Beijing A Ukraine War Enabler](#)

## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

Israel conducted an airstrike in al-Mawasi in southern Gaza on July 13, targeting  [Hamas' military chief Mohammed Deif](#), the mastermind of the terror attack on October 7, 2023. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu informed that he was [not yet "absolutely certain"](#) whether Mohammed Deif had been killed in the airstrike in Gaza. He reiterated that due to Israel's military campaign, cracks were widening in Hamas and that the IDF would dismantle Hamas leadership. Argentina has designated  [Hamas as a terrorist organisation](#), as President Javier Milei seeks to align his nation with the US and Israel.

Continuing the [deepening of US-Israel relations](#), US Defence Secretary Lloyd J. Austin spoke with his Israeli counterpart Yoav Gallant over the telephone. In Washington, Secretary Antony Blinken met with Israeli Minister for Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer and National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi. During the meeting, Secretary Blinken reaffirmed the [US' unwavering commitment to Israel's security](#) and emphasised the importance of reaching a ceasefire in Gaza. Meanwhile, [Israel-Hezbollah tensions in southern Lebanon](#) showed no signs of abating.

As part of a recent article entitled "My Message to the New World," Iranian President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian reiterated Tehran's intent to [strengthen strategic ties with China and Russia](#), particularly within multilateral frameworks such as BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), and the Eurasian Economic Union. Further, he expressed concerns regarding the US-led West's sanctions against Iran and warned Washington against pitting Middle Eastern nations against one another.

### Other Developments

[Syria's Assad says will only meet Turkey's Erdogan if 'core' issues addressed](#)



## Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [July 15](#), China's Embassy in Tajikistan denied reports that Beijing was building a military base in the Central Asian country. The Tajik Ministry of Foreign Affairs also [denied these claims](#). However, several [media outlets are reporting that](#) China deceived Tajikistan by establishing a full-scale military base instead of a joint counter-terror facility as originally planned. Last week, the British newspaper The Daily Telegraph reported that China was constructing a secret military base in Tajikistan, citing satellite images.

On July 15, [Armenia launched joint military drills with the United States](#), the latest sign of Yerevan's rapprochement with the US and West amid a deepening rift with Russia. According to Armenia's Defence Minister, Suren Papikyan, "the Eagle Partner" war games are aimed at increasing the interoperability of units participating in international peacekeeping missions". The exercises are scheduled to last through July 24. Home to a permanent Russian military base, Armenia's shift towards the West has angered the Kremlin.

On July 16, Central Asian countries held [joint drills](#) with land, naval, and air forces without the regional powers - Russia and China. The Birlestik -2024, or We're United -2024, is an operational-tactical command and staff exercise, underway from July 11 to 17, 2024, in Kazakhstan, marking a significant step in the military cooperation among Central Asian nations, including Azerbaijan. A Kazakhstan's armed forces spokesman said these exercises were "[the first of their kind](#)". These exercises, involving approximately 4,000 servicemen and 700 units of military equipment, underscore the growing military collaboration within the Organisation of Turkic States (OTS).

### Other Developments

[Kazakhstan's Chairmanship in SCO: Achievements and Future Directions](#)

[Turkmenistan to Deliver 10 bcm of Natural Gas to Iraq Via a Pipeline Transiting Iran](#)

[Turkmenistan And Afghanistan Advance TAPI Gas Pipeline Project](#)

[Japan To Deflate China's "Debt Trap" Diplomacy With Benevolent "No Risk" Aid As It Looks To Win Central Asia](#)

## Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

The Indian Navy ships INS Aditya and INS Visakhapatnam conducted a [Maritime Partnership Exercise \(MPX\)](#) with the US Naval Carrier Strike Group, comprising the USS Theodore Roosevelt and USS Daniel Inouye, in the Arabian Sea on July 12, 2024. The exercise included Replenishment at Sea, Cross Deck Flying operations, Air Defence exercises, and maritime manoeuvres, demonstrating seamless interoperability between the Indian Navy and the US Navy while enhancing their ability to undertake complex joint maritime operations.

INS Tabar, a frontline frigate of the Indian Navy, concluded a [successful three-day visit](#) to Casablanca, Morocco. The visit aimed to strengthen the bilateral relations between India and Morocco, particularly in the naval domain. Upon departure from Casablanca, INS Tabar is also scheduled to conduct a Passing Exercise (PASSEX) with the Royal Moroccan Navy.

The US Central Command (CENTCOM) confirmed that Yemen's Houthi group launched ["multiple attacks"](#) against the MT Bentley I, a Panama-flagged, Israel-owned, and [Monaco-operated tanker vessel](#) carrying vegetable oil from Russia to China in the Red Sea. CENTCOM reported that the Houthis used one uncrewed surface vessel (USV) and two small boats in the initial attack on the MT Bentley I. Later, the Houthis also launched an anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM) from a Houthi-controlled area of Yemen towards the tanker. Additionally, [CENTCOM](#) confirmed that the Houthis separately attacked the MT Chios Lion, a Liberian-flagged, Marshall Islands-owned, and Greek-operated crude oil tanker. This attack caused damage to the MT Chios Lion, but no injuries were reported.

### Other Development

[On July 16, India-Indonesia-Australia conducted the Trilateral focal points meeting.](#)

[Indian Air Force \(IAF\) arrived in Darwin, Australia to participate in Exercise Pitch Black 2024.](#)

[External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar arrived in Mauritius for a two-day official visit.](#)



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