



Delhi Policy Group

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Delhi Policy Group

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DPG Foreign Affairs Review

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ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group is among India's oldest independent think tanks with its primary focus on international and strategic issues of critical national interest. Over the past decades, the Delhi Policy Group has established itself in both domestic and international circles, particularly in the area of national security.

In keeping with India's increasing global profile as a leading power and the accompanying dynamism of India's foreign and security policy, the Delhi Policy Group has expanded its focus areas to include India's broader regional and global role; India's initiatives to strengthen its strategic periphery; India's political, security and connectivity challenges and policies across the Indo-Pacific; and the strategic partnerships that advance India's rise. To support these goals, the DPG undertakes research, publishes policy reports and organises conferences on strategic and geo-political, geo-economic, and defence and security issues.

DPG Foreign Affairs Review

DPG Foreign Affairs Review is compiled by our research team from publicly available information and open source media to provide an overview of significant developments related to India's foreign affairs during the month. Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Mohit Musaddi at mohit@dpg.org.in.

Cover Photographs:

(Photographs top to bottom)

Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh with his Russian counterpart General Sergey Shoigu in Moscow on November 6. Source: Twitter/ @Rajnath Singh

Prime Minister Modi with German Chancellor Angela Merkel during the Chancellor's visit to New Delhi from October 31 – November 2. Source: Twitter/ @Narendra Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met President Gotabaya Rajapaksa at Hyderabad House, New Delhi on November 29, 2019. Source: Ministry of External Affairs

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Contents

I.	Outgoing High-Level Visits from India	1
II.	Incoming Visits of Foreign Dignitaries/Officials to India.....	4
III.	Multilateral Fora.....	9

Outgoing High-Level Visits from India

1. [Defence Minister's visit to the Russian Federation](#)

Defence Minister of India Shri Rajnath Singh visited the Russian Federation on November 5-7 to co-chair the 19th India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC) along with his counterpart Russian Defence Minister General Sergei Shoigu in Moscow. Rajnath Singh held an in-depth discussion with General Shoigu on a range of international issues of common concern, including Russian operations in Syria. Rajnath Singh also met with Russian Minister of Industry and Trade Mr. Denis Manturov to jointly inaugurate the 'India-Russia Defence Industry Cooperation Conference'. In an address to the CEOs of Original Equipment Manufacturers, Rajnath Singh called upon the Russian Defence industry to jointly manufacture defence platforms and equipment with India in order to boost the nations' exports to third countries.



Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh with his Russian counterpart General Sergei Shoigu in Moscow on November 6. Source: Twitter/ @Rajnath Singh

2. [*Visit of the External Affairs Minister of India to Serbia*](#)

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Serbia from November 7 to 9 on the invitation of H.E. Ivica Dacic, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia. During his visit, he also met the President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić and the Defence Minister Aleksandar Vulin. India and Serbia signed a defence agreement to boost cooperation and provide the basis for defence companies from the two countries to cooperate more effectively with each other. He also delivered an [address](#) to the Indian community and Friends of India in Serbia in which he expressed delight on becoming the first Indian foreign minister to visit Serbia in the last 30 years.

His interview to Politika can be read [here](#).

3. [*Visit of the External Affairs Minister of India to Netherlands*](#)

India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar visited the Kingdom of Netherlands from November 9 to 11, during which he met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Netherlands Stef Blok for a discussion on the global situation. He also held comprehensive discussions on bilateral and multilateral issues of mutual interest with his counterpart. During his visit, EAM Jaishankar interacted with members of the foreign affairs committee of the House of Representatives of the Dutch Parliament and Dutch dignitaries across the political spectrum.

His interview with NRC Handelsblad can be read [here](#).

4. [*Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh met Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore Mr. Heng Swee Keat in Singapore*](#)

Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh visited Singapore on November 19-20 to co-chair the 4th India-Singapore Defence Ministers' Dialogue along with his counterpart Dr. Ng Eng Hen. Shri Rajnath Singh reaffirmed India's full support and active participation in the existing ASEAN regional security architecture, namely the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) and its many initiatives. The Ministers lauded the growth in cooperation in the maritime domain and reflected upon the success of the inaugural edition of the Singapore-India-Thailand Maritime Exercise (SITMEX) which was conducted in the Andaman Sea in September 2019.

The Defence Minister called on Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister of Singapore Mr. Heng Swee Keat. During their meeting, the Defence Minister expressed satisfaction at the increasing engagement of

the Armed Forces of India and Singapore in concluding joint exercises. Both leaders agreed to take the increasing bilateral defence cooperation to greater heights. Shri Rajnath Singh also communicated India's stand for not joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

5. [*Visit of the External Affairs Minister of India to Sri Lanka*](#)

India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar became the first foreign dignitary to call on newly elected President Gotabaya Rajapaksa when he visited Sri Lanka on November 19, 2019. Dr. Jaishankar conveyed PM Modi's message of a partnership of shared peace, progress, prosperity and security. The two leaders expressed satisfaction that under President Gotabaya, India-Sri Lanka relations would reach greater heights.

Incoming Visits of Foreign Dignitaries/Officials to India

1. [State Visit of the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany to India](#)

German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited India along with a delegation from 12 ministries for a three-day visit from October 31 to November 2 for the Fifth Biennial Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC). This was the Chancellor's fourth official visit to India. During her visit, Chancellor Merkel and [Prime Minister Modi](#) discussed trade and investment between the two countries as well as foreign policy and security issues. India and Germany signed five joint Declarations of Intent after the talks. Further, 11 pacts were inked between the two countries across sectors such as space, civil aviation, maritime technology, medicine and education. The full list of MOUs/ Agreements signed during the visit can be accessed [here](#). She also called on the President of India Ram Nath Kovind. The President said that India and Germany should work together to strengthen multilateralism and a multi-polar world order.



Prime Minister Modi with German Chancellor Angela Merkel during the Chancellor's visit to New Delhi from October 31 – November 2. Source: Twitter/ @Narendra Modi

2. [Visit of the Foreign Minister of Germany to India](#)

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas was part of the German delegation led by Chancellor Angela Merkel who visited India for a three-day period from October 31 to November 2 for the Fifth Biennial Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC). Maas had a meeting with India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar during which they explored the many

convergences between India and Germany at the global, regional and bilateral levels along with affirming Germany and India's shared commitment to multilateralism.

3. [*Visit of the Foreign Minister of Finland to India*](#)

H.E. Mr. Pekka Haavisto, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Finland officially visited India from November 04 – 07, 2019. His meeting with the External Affairs Minister focused on strengthening cooperation, especially in trade and investments, start-ups, environment and climate change, as well as on regional and global issues. FM Haavisto also commented on the border issue between India and Pakistan. He called for a final solution between the two countries and urged them to begin negotiations. On India's decision to revoke Article 370, Foreign Minister Haavisto remarked that "feeling [is] that the situation is not sustainable now and I can see the concerns have been raised by many other international players as well. We are concerned about news that some of the politicians are still in detention or under house arrest. The basic freedoms and freedom of expression of opinion is limited".

4. [*Prince of Wales on an official visit to India*](#)

Prince Charles of Wales was on an official visit to India on November 13. He called on the President of India, Sri Ram Nath Kovind at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The President said that India and the United Kingdom are natural partners bound by historical ties and shared value of democracy, rule of law and respect for multicultural society. The President also congratulated The Prince of Wales on his election as the head of the Commonwealth. He said that India considers the Commonwealth as an important grouping that voices the concerns of a large number of countries, including the Small Island Developing States.

5. [*Meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Mariyana Nikolova of Bulgaria*](#)

The EAM, Dr. S. Jaishankar met with the Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Mariyana Nikolova on the side-lines of the 5th India-Europe 29 Business Forum on November 20. The EAM iterated his confidence that the regular exchanges between India and Europe will immensely enhance the momentum of engagement.

6. [*Visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bhutan to India*](#)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bhutan H.E. Lyonpo (Dr.) Tandi Dorji visited India from November 17-23. During his visit, the Minister met the

EAM Dr. Jaishankar and the Foreign Secretary Mr. Vijay Gokhale called on him. The two sides reviewed the entire gamut of India-Bhutan relations. Foreign Minister Dorji also called on the Union Home Minister Amit Shah in which they discussed the historically close ties between the two nations and agreed to further strengthen the bilateral relationship in the future.



The External Affairs Minister of India with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bhutan H.E. Lyonpo (Dr.) Tandi Dorji who was on an official visit to India from November 17 to 23. Source: Twitter/ @Dr. S. Jaishankar

7. [Visit of the Japanese NSA to India](#)

Ahead of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to India and the First 2+2 ministerial dialogue between Japan and India, the Japanese National Security Advisor Shigeru Kitamura was on a visit to New Delhi on November 25-26. He met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar. The Prime Minister welcomed Kitamura to India and recalled his warm friendship with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. EAM Jaishankar and NSA Kitamura held discussions on India-Japan foreign policy cooperation.

8. [India and Mozambique reiterate commitment to strengthen bilateral defence cooperation](#)

Mozambique Minister of Defence Mr. Atanasio Salvador M'Tumuke was on an official visit to India along with a delegation on November 28-29, 2019. It follows the earlier visit of Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh to Mozambique in July 2019. The Mozambican Minister met with the Defence Minister during which both Ministers reiterated their commitment to strengthen the bilateral defence relationship between the two countries. Defence Minister M'Tumuke also met with EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar and the two held discussions on India and Mozambique's deep and diversifying relations, especially in defence and development cooperation.

9. [State Visit of President of Sri Lanka to India](#)

Newly elected President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, H.E. Gotabaya Rajapaksa was on a three-day state visit to India from November 28 to 30. This was his first official visit as President. During the visit, Rajapaksa held delegation level talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and also called on President Ram Nath Kovind. [PM Modi announced](#) that India will lend \$400 million to boost infrastructure and development in Sri Lanka and another special Line of Credit of 50 million dollars to Sri Lanka to combat terrorism. India and Sri Lanka have also agreed to early use the previously announced \$100 million credit line for solar projects in Sri Lanka.



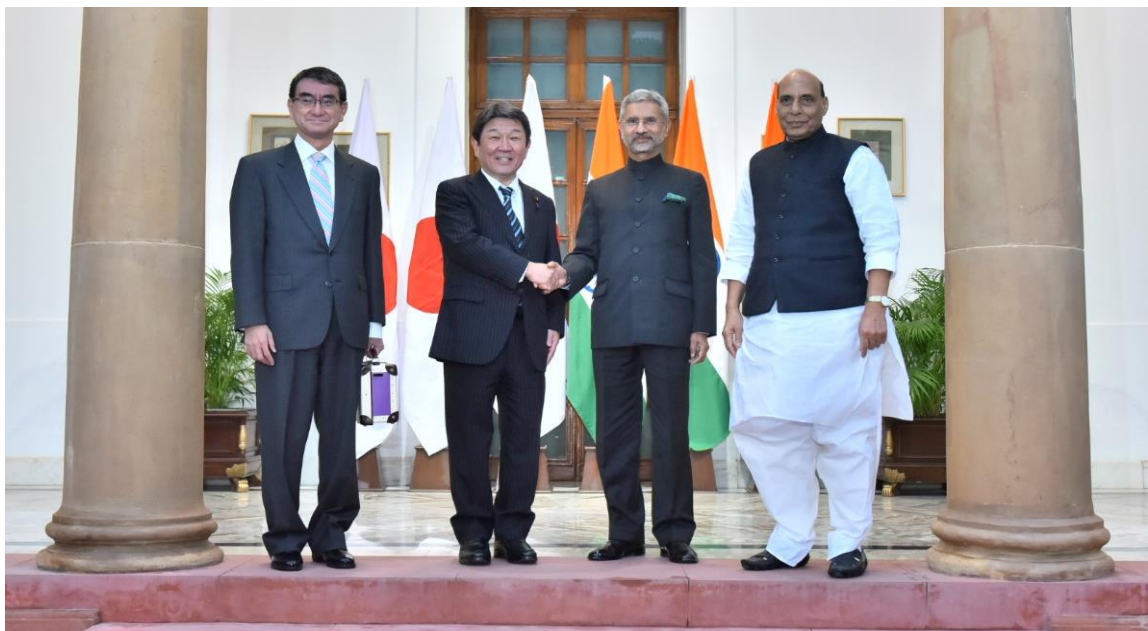
Prime Minister Narendra Modi met President Gotabaya Rajapaksa at Hyderabad House, New Delhi on November 29, 2019. Source: Ministry of External Affairs

10. [India-Japan Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue \(2+2\)](#)

Defence Minister of India, Shri Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. S. Jaishankar, met Foreign Affairs Minister of Japan, Mr. Toshimitsu Motegi, and Minister of Defense of Japan, Mr. Tarō Kōno, on November 30, 2019 in New Delhi for the first India-Japan 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting. The 2+2 meeting provided an opportunity for the two sides to review the status of and exchange further views on strengthening defence and security cooperation between India and Japan so as to provide greater depth to the 'India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership'.

In the [Joint Statement](#), the Ministers condemned in the strongest terms the growing threat of terrorism and noted in this context the threat posed to regional security by terrorist networks operating out of Pakistan and called upon it to take resolute and irreversible action against them and fully comply with international commitments including to FATF. They also reaffirmed the importance of supporting ASEAN centrality and realizing North Korea's complete dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction.

During their visit, the Foreign Affairs Minister and the Minister of Defence [called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi](#) who expressed his satisfaction at the two sides being able to accomplish the goal to start the 2+2 Dialogue set by the two Prime Ministers during the 13th India-Japan Annual Summit held in Japan in October 2018.



The India – Japan 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue was held in Hyderabad House, New Delhi on November 30, 2019. Source: Ministry of External Affairs

Multilateral Fora

1. [*Meeting of Council of Heads of Government \(CHG\) of SCO, Tashkent*](#)

Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh travelled to Tashkent to represent India at a two-day meeting of the council of heads of government (CHG) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) on November 1-2, 2019. The leaders focused their discussions on the multilateral economic cooperation and economic development in the SCO region. While addressing the 18th meeting of the CHG, the Defence Minister called upon the member countries of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to strengthen and implement all existing international laws and mechanisms, without exception or double standards, to combat terrorism and its enablers.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Shri Rajnath Singh held bilateral consultations with the Defence Minister of Uzbekistan Major General Bakhodir Nizamovich Kurbanov where the two sides signed three MoUs to enhance cooperation in the field of Military Medicine and Military Education between the Armed Forces of the two countries. The two Ministers also witnessed the 'Curtain Raiser' of the first-ever India-Uzbekistan Joint Exercise 'Dustlik 2019'.

2. [*Prime Minister's Visit to Thailand for ASEAN Summits*](#)

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi [visited Bangkok](#), Thailand from November 2-4, 2019 to participate in various ASEAN related summits such as the ASEAN-India Summit, East Asia Summit (EAS) and the RCEP Summit.

In his remarks as co-chair of the ASEAN-India Summit, Prime Minister Modi underlined the centrality of ASEAN in India's Act East Policy and the Indo-Pacific vision. He highlighted the convergences of India and ASEAN's respective approaches to the Indo-Pacific. He also called for intensification of partnership in capacity building which included areas like agriculture, science, IT, engineering and the network of universities. He also referred to the \$1 billion line of credit which could be used for further strengthening connectivity in both physical and digital domains between India and ASEAN countries.

On November 4, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced India's decision not to join RCEP, indicating that this reflected both an assessment of the current global situation as well as a lack of fairness and

balance in the agreement itself. India's decision to hold back the deal was primarily due to the significant unresolved issues of core interest to India.

Apart from the summits, the Prime Minister also held bilateral discussions with leaders of [Vietnam](#), [Australia](#), [Japan](#), [Myanmar](#), [Indonesia](#) and [Thailand](#). The PM reviewed the progress made in the bilateral relationship with each of these countries and also made note of the frequent high-level meetings and exchanges at all levels. Views on regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest were also exchanged.



Group photo of the Heads of State / Heads of Government at 16th India-ASEAN Summit in Bangkok on November 03, 2019. Source: Ministry of External Affairs

3. [External Affairs Minister of India's visit to France for the Paris Peace Forum](#)

The External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar attended the Paris Peace Forum on November 11-12. During his [intervention](#), he called for a coordinated action by nations to prevent the forces of terrorism and extremism from building presence in the digital domain. He also suggested ways to counter the challenges in the cyberspace namely, protection of data privacy, maintaining openness, strengthening of national cyber security ecosystems and provision of space to varied forms of cultural expressions and multiple societal narratives. On the sidelines of the Forum, he met with French President Emmanuel Macron and discussed important strategic issues.

His interview to Le Monde can be read [here](#).



The External Affairs Minister of India met with French President Emmanuel Macron during the Paris Peace Forum on November 12. Source: Twitter/ @Dr. S. Jaishankar

4. [Prime Minister's Visit to Brazil for the BRICS Summit](#)

Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Brasilia, Brazil on November 13-15, 2019 to [attend the 11th BRICS Summit](#). His remarks at the Plenary Session were focused on the theme of "Economic growth for an innovative future". Some of the key highlights included BRICS's role in combatting the 2008 financial crisis, emphasis on science and technology, innovation and the digital economy, establishment of the BRICS Women Business Alliance, and the need to address the current threats to multilateralism, international trade and the rules-based order. The Prime Minister also made remarks at the BRICS Business Forum and at the Leaders Dialogue with BRICS Business Council and the New Development Bank.

During his visit, the Prime Minister held bilateral discussions with counterparts from China, Brazil and Russia. On his [meeting with the Brazilian President](#), both leaders agreed to comprehensively enhance the strategic partnership between India and Brazil. Prime Minister Modi also invited the President of Brazil to be the Chief Guest at the Republic Day 2020. The Brazilian President has accepted the invitation with pleasure.

On his [meeting with the Chinese President](#), Xi Jinping, the two leaders agreed on the importance of maintaining close dialogue on matters relating to trade and investment.

[His meeting with the Russian President](#) focused on reviewing the progress made in the bilateral relationship since the PM's visit to Vladivostok in September 2019 for the Eastern Economic Forum and the India-Russia Annual Summit. The two leaders also noted with satisfaction that the USD 25 billion target of bilateral trade by 2025 has already been achieved.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro during the 2019 BRICS Summit. Source: Twitter/ @Narendra Modi

5. [Defence Minister's visit to Bangkok for the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus \(ADMM-Plus\)](#)

Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh visited Bangkok to attend the 6th ADMM-Plus on November 17-18. In the Meeting, he called upon the international community to eliminate terrorist safe havens, disrupt their networks & financing and thwart their cross-border movement to ensure sustainable regional security.

On the negotiations for a Code of Conduct for the South China Sea, Shri Rajnath Singh hoped that the outcome of these talks will keep with all relevant international laws, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and promote freedom of navigation, overflight and lawful commerce for all.

On the sidelines of ADMM-Plus, the Defence Minister held bilateral meetings with US Secretary of Defence Dr Mark T Esper, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand General Prawit Wongsuwan, Defence Minister of Japan Mr Taro Kono, Defence Minister of Australia Ms Linda Reynolds and Defence Minister of New Zealand Mr Ron Mark. In the deliberations, the RM reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral defence relations with the respective leaders and discussed ways to further improving the ties.



Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh attended the 6th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus on "Sustainable Security" in Bangkok on November 18. Source: Twitter/ @Rajnath Singh

6. [External Affairs Minister of India's visit to Tokyo for the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting](#)

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar participated in the last G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting under the Japanese presidency of G20 on November 22-23. On the sidelines of the meeting, the EAM met bilaterally with the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Chile, China, Japan, the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Spain.



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