



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

INDIA'S PROXIMITY ARCHIVES

July 9, 2025

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South Asia:

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Delhi Policy Group

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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, Jayantika Rao T.V, Divya Rai and Arshiya Chaturvedi, Research Associates. Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Sanket Joshi at sanket@dpg.org.in.

Cover Images:

South Asia: Family photo of XVII BRICS Summit, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, July 6-7, 2025. Source: [MEA/Flickr](#)

East Asia: Foreign Minister of Japan, IWAYA Takeshi, Minister addressed the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting in the presence of leaders including, H.E. Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, the Minister of External Affairs of India, Senator the Hon. Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Australia the Honourable Marco Rubio, Secretary of State of the United States of America, on July 2. Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan](#)

West Asia: US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met at the White House on July 7, 2025. Source: [Official X Handle/The White House](#)

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◇ How Asia Will Navigate U.S. Reciprocal Tariffs Set to Take Effect on August 1

South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Despite human rights concerns, Russia has become the first nation to [officially recognised](#) the Taliban regime. Both Zamir Kabulov, Russia's special representative for Afghanistan and Dmitry Zhirnov, the Russian ambassador in Kabul confirmed Russia's recognition of the Taliban Government. Mr. Kabulov called the Islamic Emirate government in Kabul an "objective partner" in counterterrorism efforts, urging [Russia to provide support](#) including weapons to help eliminate the remaining terrorist threats in Afghanistan. Russia will host the seventh round of the [Moscow Format consultations](#) on Afghanistan in September or October 2025; the Taliban's interim government will have full participant status, as announced by Kabulov. According to the United Nations, the matter of Russia's recognition of Afghanistan's interim government is a [bilateral concern](#) for Kabul and Moscow.

The presence of terrorist groups in Afghanistan, coupled with opportunities in its mineral and connectivity sectors, may have influenced Russia's decision to acknowledge the Taliban government. India may soon need to formulate a policy in anticipation of similar actions by other regional countries.

During an [official visit](#) to the United States, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of Air Staff of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), met with high-ranking US military and political officials. The ISPR press release indicated that the meetings centered on strengthening military collaboration, improving interoperability, and investigating avenues for joint training and technological collaboration. This marked the first visit from an active PAF chief in more than a decade.

The visit followed directly after the Pakistani Chief of Army Staff's week-long visit to the United States. The series of visits and other bilateral activities over the past few months between the United States and Pakistan point towards improved relations.

The joint declaration from the [XVII BRICS Summit](#) (Rio de Janeiro, July 6-7) and the [Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting](#) (Washington, D.C., July 1) explicitly denounced the terrorist attack perpetrated in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, on April 22. The statement called for a firm rejection of terrorism and an end to double standards in counterterrorism measures. In light of this, the member states urged cooperative action. Consequently, to curtail unlawful maritime

activities within the region, the Quad nations declared the commencement of the inaugural [Quad-at-Sea Ship](#) Observer Mission—a collaborative initiative intended to enhance interoperability and information exchange.

India's success in uniting diverse voices to combat terrorism, despite geopolitical differences, is evident in the international support it has received on this issue.

Other Developments

[Tajikistan orders Afghan Refugees to leave within 15 days](#)

[India, Maldives in talks to deepen bilateral trade, investment ties](#)

[Maldives invites PM Modi to Independence Day celebrations on July 26](#)

[Pakistan, Poland agree to boost trade, security cooperation](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [July 6](#), Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto attended the 17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This was Indonesia's first summit after becoming a full member of the organisation in January 2025. Prabowo proposed that Indonesia act as a [bridge builder](#) between the Global South and the Global North. He emphasised that the strategy is designed to reduce tensions between developing and developed nations, as Indonesia aims to prevent BRICS from becoming an opposing force that further deepens the divide between these two groups of countries.

Prabowo's BRICS proposal showcases his commitment to fulfilling his election promise of elevating Indonesia's geopolitical presence on the global stage.

At the 58th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim [urged](#) Southeast Asian countries to "act with purpose" and enhance trade among each other in the face of global uncertainty, on July 9. He described tariffs, export restrictions and investment barriers as "the sharpened instruments of geopolitical rivalry". He further stated, "As we navigate external pressures, we need to fortify our internal foundations. Trade more among ourselves, invest more in one another, and advance integration across sectors with resolve." Out of the 10 members, [only Vietnam secured a deal](#), by lowering their own tariffs and pledging concessions.

Trump's tariff letters to Southeast Asian countries raises concerns about the effectiveness of trade negotiations with the US and the growing concerns of US's bullying tactics, further affecting Southeast Asian countries' relations with America.

Japan is [reportedly considering](#) transferring six decommissioned Abukuma-class destroyer escorts to the Philippines. The Abukuma-class ships, built between 1989 and 1993, are primarily designed for anti-submarine warfare, patrol, and coastal defense, and are being retired as Japan transitions to newer Mogami-class frigates. The Philippine Navy [confirmed](#) that its officials are preparing to conduct a "joint visual inspection" of the vessels later this summer. This inspection follows an invitation from Japan's Defense Ministry. This transfer will mark Tokyo's first full naval platform export in decades.

This potential transfer highlights Japan's broader push to strengthen defence ties with the Philippines, and also reflects a shared collective security among U.S. allies to deter assertive Chinese actions in the South China Sea and East China Sea.

Other Developments

[Malaysia cuts interest rate by quarter point as tariff threat looms](#)

[China's "Anti-Rafale" Campaign Flops? Indonesia Likely To Acquire 2X French Jets Than Originally Planned: Media](#)

[Japan Steps Up New Security Assistance to Countries Caught Between US and China](#)

East Asia

by

Arshiya Chaturvedi

At the session on peace and security and global governance reform of [the XVII BRICS Summit, Chinese Premier Li Qiang congratulated the Brazilian leadership and welcomed Indonesia as a full member](#). Emphasising President Xi Jinping's vision of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefit, Mr. Qiang averred China's call for equality, mutual respect, and unity to address conflicts, promote development, and build a more inclusive global order. Underscoring BRICS' leadership role in the Global South, he urged the bloc to uphold justice, champion peace, promote economic growth, and foster cultural inclusiveness through intercultural dialogue and other person-to-person exchanges. In this respect, Mr. Qiang also announced new initiatives, including the China-BRICS New Quality Productive Forces Research Centre and the BRICS New Industry Golden Egret Excellence Scholarships, which will help BRICS countries train talents in industry and telecommunication, and further innovation-driven development.

China through proactive leadership and diplomacy within the BRICS, aims to expand its influence in the Global South, and shape a multipolar world where it plays a central role, much like the US in the liberal international system.

On July 1, 2025, [Japanese Foreign Minister Iwama Takeshi participated in the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Washington D.C.](#) alongside his counterparts from Australia, India, and the U.S. The leaders from all four member states reaffirmed their commitment to advancing a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" through strengthened cooperation. The ministers held strategic discussions on regional security, expressing firm opposition to unilateral changes to the status quo in the East and South China Seas and reaffirming their commitment to the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. They also addressed global issues, including the situations in Ukraine and the Middle East. Emphasising priority areas such as maritime security, economic resilience, emerging technologies, and humanitarian response, they welcomed initiatives such as the Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission and the Indo-Pacific Logistics Network, and agreed to deepen collaboration on critical minerals.

The above announced initiatives will reduce reliance on China-centric supply chains and facilitate Quad members' resilience in the Indo-Pacific region.

On July 7, 2025, during the 11th session of the UN Open-ended Working Group on ICTs, [the Republic of Korea officially presented its national position on the application of international law in cyberspace](#). It emphasised that states may bear legal responsibility for harmful cyber activities, and that international humanitarian law applies during armed conflict involving cyber operations. Recognising the growing strategic importance of cyberspace and the lack of universally accepted norms, Korea joins other nations in contributing to norm-building by issuing its position paper. This move, grounded in expert and inter-agency consultations, reflects Korea's commitment to responsible cyber conduct and positions it as a leading voice in shaping international cyber norms.

South Korea's proactive approach to advanced technologies, underscores its growing ambition to position itself as a technologically capable and norm-shaping power in the evolving tech-security landscape.

On [July 20](#), Japan will hold its upper house elections. The results in the country's 32 single-seat districts will be crucial for the ruling coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Komeito. The LDP-Komeito coalition lost its majority in the lower house in October 2024, making it essential for them to maintain control of the upper house to keep their policy agenda on track and avoid having to negotiate with opposition parties for every legislative decision.

Poor performance in the upper house elections would deliver a heavy blow to Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's grip on power.

Other Development

[Taiwan detects 20 Chinese air sorties around its airspace](#)

[Donald Trump issues letters, says US will impose 25% tariffs on Japan, South Korea](#)

[French President Emmanuel Macron Meets with Wang Yi](#)

[North Korean crosses heavily fortified border to South Korea](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met at the White House on July 7. This meeting took place in the context of recent airstrikes by the US and Israel on Iranian nuclear facilities and the US-backed proposal for a 60-day ceasefire to end the conflict in Gaza. Both leaders reiterated their intent to [relocate the Palestinians from Gaza](#), claiming that neighbouring countries had been cooperating on this issue. PM Netanyahu [opposed the creation of a Palestinian state](#), asserting that it would be used to destroy Israel. Earlier, in February 2025, Egypt, Jordan, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the Palestinian Authority, and the Arab League had [rejected the US's proposal](#) to displace Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank.

Israel and the US's insistence that Palestinians be relocated from Gaza raises concerns about "ethnic cleansing" in the region, as well as a clear rejection of the Two-State solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

US Special Envoy for the Middle East, Steve Witkoff, expressed hope that Washington and Tehran could [resume their stalled nuclear talks](#) in the coming few weeks. Meanwhile, during an interview on July 6, Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian urged the US to [resolve differences with Tehran through dialogue](#) and avoid getting entangled in another Middle East war. Iran's Foreign Ministry, on its part, rejected that it had requested any talks with the US regarding the nuclear programme.

This underscores the lack of mutual trust between the US and Iran, as well as Iran's concerns regarding Israeli influence on US strategic decisions in the Middle East over the years.

Brazil hosted the 17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro on July 6-7. A joint statement issued by the BRICS group, which includes countries from West Asia such as Egypt, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, [condemned military strikes on Iran](#) as a violation of international law and the United Nations Charter, and expressed serious concern about the escalation of the security situation in the Middle East.

Although the BRICS joint statement did not directly mention the US, its condemnation of military strikes on Iran indicates the group's concern over

unilateral US actions in the region and its destabilising impact on developing countries.

Other Developments

[US 'unbelievably satisfied' with Lebanon's reply to proposal on disarming Hezbollah](#)

[Revoking the Foreign Terrorist Organisation Designation of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On July 7, the United States announced that starting August 1, 2025, a 25 percent 'reciprocal tariff' will be levied on Kazakhstan. US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross announced the decision that was confirmed with an [official letter from President Donald Trump](#) to Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. In [a July 8 statement](#), the Kazakh Ministry of Trade and Integration stated the majority of Kazakhstan's exports will continue to be supplied without new tariffs, as they are exempt from the newly introduced duties. This exemption covers key raw materials and strategic goods, including oil, uranium, silver, ferroalloys, tantalum, and titanium.

While the economic impact on Kazakhstan may be limited, the announcement of new tariffs signals a decisive and strategic shift in US foreign policy, particularly towards Central Asia.

On [July 4](#), a media report stated that Pakistan and Russia have agreed to collaborate on establishing a robust rail and road network, linking the South Asian country with Central Asia and Russia, thereby providing the landlocked countries with direct access to warm waters. The initiative is reportedly Pakistan's attempt to transform itself into a strategic transit hub by enhancing trade corridors and logistical routes that extend to Russia.

Due to the limited physical connectivity between India and Central Asia, which restricts the countries' trade and economic engagement, the connectivity project mentioned above could further diminish India's presence in the region.

At the 17th BRICS high-level summit held in Brazil, on July 6, ten countries — including Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan — were recognized as [partner nations](#) of the organization. [In his remarks](#), Kazakh Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Murat Nurtleu underscored the country's commitment to promoting a just, inclusive, and sustainable world order based on the UN Charter and international law. He further emphasised Kazakhstan's interest in deepening economic cooperation with BRICS countries and advancing digital technologies.

Central Asian countries have become active in joining various international mechanisms to promote their multivector foreign policy to ensure balancing.

Other Developments

[New Development Bank adds Colombia, Uzbekistan as official new members](#)

[Central Asia to have first Indian-owned gold production facility](#)

[Russia-Azerbaijan Tensions Soar, Threatening Moscow's Influence](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

The Houthis [launched](#) back-to-back attacks on two merchant ships in the Red Sea over the past two days, marking the first Houthi attacks on shipping since November 2024. On July 6, 2025, the Houthis targeted the Magic Seas, a Liberian-flagged, Greek-owned bulk carrier, using drones, missiles, rocket-propelled grenades, and small arms fire. The vessel was set ablaze, the crew of 22 was forced to abandon ship, and the ship [ultimately](#) sank. The following day, the Houthis [attacked](#) another ship—the Eternity C, another Liberian-flagged, Greek-owned cargo vessel—using speedboats armed with rocket-propelled grenades and bomb-carrying drones. This assault killed at least three crew members and injured two others, leaving the ship adrift and severely damaged.

These twin assaults by the Houthis raise a question about whether this marks the beginning of a renewed campaign in the Red Sea after a period of relative calm or if it is simply a one-off attack meant to send a political message. If the attacks continue, they could destabilise the critical shipping lane, causing longer transit times and higher shipping costs worldwide.

On July 3, 2025, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), [chaired](#) by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, granted Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for 10 capital acquisition proposals worth approximately Rs 1.05 lakh crore, all through indigenous sourcing. The approved procurements include Armoured Recovery Vehicles, Electronic Warfare Systems, an Integrated Common Inventory Management System for the Tri-Services, and Surface-to-Air Missiles. Additionally, to further bolster maritime security, AoNs has approved the procurement of Moored Mines, Mine Countermeasure Vessels, Super Rapid Gun Mounts, and Submersible Autonomous Vessels.

The DAC's approval exclusively under the Buy (Indian-IDDMM) category underscores the Indian government's strong commitment to Aatmanirbharta in defence. Given recent threats in the Indian Ocean and Red Sea, these assets will enable the Navy to better protect both military and commercial shipping from underwater and surface threats.

Other Developments

[Indian Navy and Bharat Electronics Limited \(BEL\) signed a contract for the implementation of National Maritime Domain Awareness \(NMDA\) Project](#)

[Hindustan Shipyard Limited delivered Nistar, the first indigenously constructed Diving Support Vessel, to the Indian Navy](#)

[Japan Coast Guard ship 'Itsukushima' arrived at Chennai Port on July 7, 2025, as part of its Global Ocean Voyage Training](#)



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