



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

## INDIA'S PROXIMITY ARCHIVES

July 16, 2025

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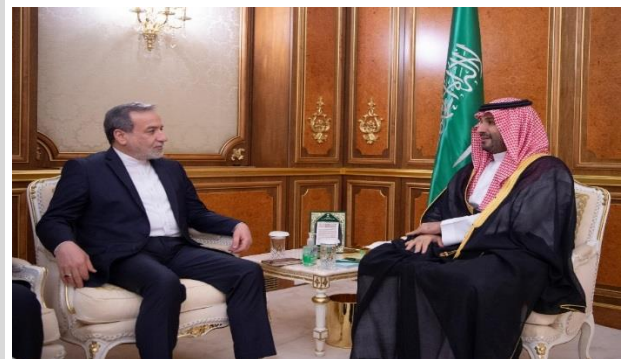
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**Delhi Policy Group**

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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](mailto:sanket@dpg.org.in).

### Cover Images:

**South Asia:** Family Picture of 23rd Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government, Tianjin, China, July 15, 2025. Source: [X/ @DrSJashankar](#)

**East Asia:** Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Beijing for the Meeting of the Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Member States. Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China](#)

**West Asia:** Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman met with Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, in Jeddah on July 8, 2025. Source: [Official X Handle/Foreign Ministry KSA](#)

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## Watch Points

|   |                                                                                            |
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| ◇ | <b>UN Conference on the Israel-Palestine conflict to be held in New York on July 28-29</b> |
| ◇ | <b>China and Russia Strengthen their relationship on sidelines of the SCO</b>              |
| ◇ | <b>India and Greece conducted Maritime Passing Exercise (M-PASSEX)</b>                     |

## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

During a visit to Pakistan from July 15-16, Indonesian Defence Minister, Lieutenant General (Ret.) Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin, [engaged in](#) discussions with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir. General Sjamsoeddin articulated his country's intention to enhance defence cooperation and investigate collaborative opportunities in the defence manufacturing sector with Pakistan. A press release notes Prime Minister Shehbaz's reaffirmation of Pakistan's commitment to seeking and developing partnerships with Indonesia in mutually beneficial investment projects through joint ventures. The [ongoing initiatives](#) under the Pakistan-Indonesia Defence Cooperation Agreement were also reviewed, with an agreement to expedite implementation in areas of mutual priority.

*Defence cooperation between Pakistan and Indonesia has involved joint military exercises, procurement of defence materials, and the transfer of defence-related expertise. In light of the recent conflict between India and Pakistan, this high-level visit assumes crucial significance.*

On July 14-15, Dr. S. Jaishankar, India's Minister of External Affairs, [travelled to China](#), to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers' Meeting (CFM). A [bilateral meeting](#) between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Dr. Jaishankar, held alongside the SCO meeting, focused on reviewing the recent progress made in stabilising and improving relations between China and India. At the meeting, Dr. Jaishankar stressed the [importance of cooperation](#) regarding trans-border rivers, particularly the resumption of hydrological data sharing by China. Dr. Jaishankar also engaged in discussions with Chinese Vice President Han Zheng and met with Minister Liu Jianchao of the International Department of the Communist Party of China. In his speech to the 23rd SCO Council of Heads of Government, [Dr. Jaishankar underscored](#) the imperative for the SCO to resolutely confront terrorism, separatism, and extremism, thus remaining faithful to its founding objectives.

*In the context of global supply chain instability and trade conflict, bilateral meetings between India and China focused on stabilising their relationship. Through these discussions, India forcefully reiterated its commitment to counter-terrorism and to the principles of mutual respect and sovereign equality underpinning regional cooperation.*

UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan) chief Roza Otunbayeva has issued an urgent plea to the international community for aid in response to Afghanistan's [escalating crisis](#), exacerbated by the mass deportation of Afghan citizens from Iran. On July 15, the UNAMA reported that following her visit to the Islam Qala border crossing in Herat, Ms. Otunbayeva expressed concern over the overwhelming scale of returns, exceeding the capacity of both the Taliban and humanitarian organisations. Currently, an estimated 30,000 Afghan migrants are being expelled from Iran each day, with many arriving at the border lacking essential provisions such as food, shelter, and medical attention.

*The repatriation of millions of documented and undocumented Afghan refugees to Afghanistan is being enforced by neighbouring countries, including Pakistan, Iran, and Tajikistan. The refugee crisis possesses the potential to quickly devolve into a widespread humanitarian disaster.*

A [35 percent reciprocal tariff](#) on goods from Bangladesh, commencing August 1st, was announced by U.S. President Donald Trump on July 8th. The garment industry in Bangladesh constitutes over 80 percent of export revenue, provides employment for four million individuals, and contributes approximately 10 percent to the nation's annual GDP. National Board of Revenue data indicates that 2,377 companies exported between 1 and 100 percent of their products to the United States during fiscal year 2024–25. On July 14, Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman stated that Bangladesh [requested an extension](#) from the U.S. to continue negotiations on the tariff issue.

*The Bangladeshi garment industry faces substantial job losses and potential economic collapse without immediate intervention, exacerbating existing economic challenges.*

## Other Developments

[Kabul seeks to buy Military equipment from Russia](#)

[UNHCR: Bangladesh has welcomed 150,000 Rohingya refugees in last 18 months](#)

[Armed men kidnap and kill nine passengers in Balochistan](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [July 16](#), US President Donald Trump said the US would impose a 19 percent tariff on goods from Indonesia under a new agreement, while US exports will not be taxed. Following the announcement at the White House, President Trump stated, "They are paying 19% and we are not paying anything" and further said "We are going to have full access to Indonesia". Trump later said on his Truth Social platform that [Indonesia had agreed to buy](#) US\$ 15 billion of US energy products, US\$ 4.5 billion of American farm products and 50 Boeing Jets ("many of them 777s), though no time frame was specified.

*The recent tariff announcement offers a preview of the anticipated trade deals with the United States, with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick emphasising "switching the asymmetry" through these negotiations.*

A series of ASEAN meetings were held in Kuala Lumpur from July 10 to 11. The Indian delegation was led by Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Textiles [MoS (PM)], Shri Pabitra Margherita at the [ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting](#) (AIFMM), [15<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting](#) (EAS FMM) and 32nd ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). The EAS and ARF forums brought together not only ASEAN member countries but also partners such as Japan, the US, Canada, Russia, Australia, South Korea and India. During the meetings, Following the meetings, it was announced that a [joint meeting of ASEAN's foreign and economic ministers](#) will be held in October for a "conscious move towards policy integration in response to a more volatile global landscape:

*Despite criticising US President Trump's tariffs and promising to have a united front earlier in the week, in the presence of Marco Rubio, the foreign ministers did not touch on the sweeping tariffs or even broach the issue of trade, calls into question ASEAN's credibility.*

On [July 10](#), Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Takeshi IWAYA, US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, and Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Republic of the Philippines Maria Theresa Lazaro, held a Foreign Ministers' Meeting. It was the first Japan-US-Philippines Foreign Ministers' Meeting with these three ministers. The three Ministers exchanged views on the recent situation in the East and South China Seas, taking into account that July 12 marked nine years since the issuance of the South China Sea Arbitral Award, and reiterated their

opposition to attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force and coercion, and confirmed the importance of respecting the rule of law, and underscored the need to uphold freedom of navigation. In addition, Secretary Lazaro expressed her willingness to host the Japan-US-Philippines Maritime Dialogue by autumn of this year, which was welcomed. The three Ministers confirmed that advancing resilience of infrastructure, information and communications, and supply chains of resources, including critical minerals, through cooperation on the Luzon Economic Corridor and further collaboration also in the field of cyber and civil nuclear energy will lead to cooperation in the security field. The three Ministers then agreed to follow up and elaborate on cooperation in these areas among the three countries.

*The meeting reiterates Philippines and Japan's broader push for a shared collective security with the United States to deter an assertive China in the South and East China Sea.*

## Other Developments

[Myanmar offers to send tariff negotiation team to US in reply to Trump](#)

[Indonesia, EU agree to move forward on trade deal](#)

[Malaysia lashes out at Trump's pick of 'Zionist' envoy Nick Adams: 'not welcome here'](#)

## East Asia

by

Arshiya Chaturvedi

On July 13, [Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Beijing](#) on the sidelines of the SCO Foreign Ministers' Meeting. Wang Yi noted the strengths of China-Russia relations as the most stable, mature, and strategically valuable bilateral ties. He also emphasised that the priority for the two nations should be to prepare for future high-level exchanges, enhance comprehensive strategic coordination, advance mutual development and jointly navigate global challenges. Underscoring the SCO's role in promoting multilateralism and cooperation among the Global South, Wang Yi expressed China's readiness to work with Russia and other member states for the success of the upcoming Tianjin Summit. Sergei Lavrov, echoing Wang Yi's views, affirmed Russia's commitment to deepening cooperation with China across various fields and achieving continued progress in bilateral relations.

*Amid escalating tensions with the West, particularly the US, the deepening China-Russia relationship reflects their converging strategic interest of countering US influence and reshaping the global order.*

On July 11, [Japanese Foreign Minister Iwaya Takeshi held a trilateral meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and ROK Vice Foreign Minister Park Yoonjoo](#) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Calling for stronger coordination and solidarity among the three nations, the leaders reaffirmed the importance of robust Japan-US and US-ROK alliances in the face of growing regional security challenges. The three representatives expressed serious concerns over North Korea's nuclear and missile development, military ties with Russia, and cyber activities, and reiterated their commitment to complete denuclearisation, pursuant to the UN Resolution. They pledged closer cooperation on the issue of regional stability, particularly in response to unilateral attempts to alter the status quo by force or coercion, as well as on economic security.

*The US, Japan, and the ROK are deepening trilateral ties to strengthen deterrence and reaffirm their commitment to an open and rule-based order in the Indo-Pacific amid rising threats from North Korea, China, and Russia.*

On July 12, [Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence reported 14 Chinese military aircraft, nine naval vessels, and one official ship operating](#) near Taiwan. Of these, a total of nine aircraft crossed the median line into Taiwan's northern

and eastern ADIZ. In response, Taiwan deployed aircraft, naval ships, and coastal missile systems to monitor the situation. The incident comes amid heightened tensions, with President Lai Ching-te's recent warning to China for its ongoing military intimidation and influence warfare aimed at annexing Taiwan under its broader hegemonic ambitions.

*Taiwan's vital role in the global tech supply chain has made it a geopolitical focal point. The US has consistently opposed any unilateral move by China to change the status quo and is reinforcing East Asian alliances to ensure a united strategic response and strong deterrence.*

## Other Development

[Chinese military aircrafts' unusual close approach toward Self-Defense Force aircrafts](#)

[Albanese Reaffirms Taiwan Stance as He Starts China Visit](#)

[Kim Jong Un reaffirms support for Russia's war in Ukraine](#)

[The 26th ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers' Meeting](#)

[Immigration becomes election issue in Japan amid tough economy](#)

[Japan-U.S.-Philippines Foreign Ministers' Meeting](#)

## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

After several days of clashes between the new Syrian regime forces and the minority Druze community, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) carried out drone strikes in the [southwestern Syrian city of Sweida](#) on July 15. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu informed that the Syrian regime's weapons that entered the Sweida area of the Druze Mountain violated the demilitarisation policy, which prohibits the entry of forces and weapons that endanger Israel from southern Syria. Due to Israel's [deep covenant of blood with its Druze citizens](#) and their familial connections with Druze in Syria, PM Netanyahu warned Damascus that Israel remains committed to protecting the Druze community in Syria. Since the outbreak of clashes in Sweida province, at least [203 people have been killed](#), according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

*These clashes demonstrate lingering sectarian tensions and distrust among Syria's minorities, such as the Alawites, Druze, and Christians, against Syria's new Islamist-led government.*

According to French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot, a rescheduled United Nations conference to [discuss post-war Gaza reconstruction](#) and recognition of a Palestinian State will be held on July 28-29. French President Macron had previously stated his intention to attend this conference and recognise a Palestinian State; however, he is [no longer expected to attend](#), thereby reducing the possibility of any major announcements being made.

*France, Britain, the US, and other Western countries largely remain opposed to the creation of a Palestinian State, as demonstrated by President Macron's likely absence at the UN Conference on the Israel-Palestine Conflict.*

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Mohammed bin Salman, met with Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, in Jeddah on July 8. The two leaders discussed bilateral relations and recent regional developments. During the meeting, Saudi Arabia highlighted its [commitment to promoting dialogue](#) as a means of resolving disputes, while Iran expressed gratitude to Riyadh for "condemning Israeli aggression".

*Following the 12-day war, Abbas Araghchi's visit to Saudi Arabia demonstrates that the rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia through Chinese mediation continues.*

## Other Developments

[PKK disarmament opens new page for Turkey, Erdogan says](#)

[Russia Slams Report It Backed 'Zero Enrichment' Iran Nuclear Deal](#)

[US-backed ceasefire plan for Gaza still under discussion, but optimism fading](#)

## Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Murat Nurtleu made a significant move towards enhancing regional cooperation by [visiting Kabul on July 11](#). During this visit, he signed a [US\\$ 500 million agreement](#) for the Herat-Torghundi railway project. Nurtleu also met with Afghanistan's acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi and other senior officials from the Taliban-led government. In a joint statement, both sides emphasized their commitment to strengthening bilateral relations in areas such as transit, trade, education, and regional security.

*Despite differences between the countries over Afghanistan's controversial Qosh Tepa Canal project and its implications for regional water security concerns, the two countries are moving forward on the development agenda.*

On [July 14](#), soldiers from Russia's 201st military base in Tajikistan arrived at the Termez training ground, where they will participate in a week-long joint exercise with Uzbek troops, titled Cooperation-2025. [As part of the drills](#), participating units will practice storming and clearing populated areas held by illegal armed groups, seizing key facilities and positions, and engaging small enemy units.

*Russia's military exercises with Uzbekistan reflect its effort to maintain an active military presence in the region, especially as Central Asian countries increasingly lean towards China.*

On [July 16](#), Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Kazakh Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Murat Nurtleu in North China's Tianjin. Noting that Kazakhstan is a founding member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Wang Yi said that China looks forward to making joint efforts with Kazakhstan and other member states to ensure the complete success of the Tianjin summit. Similarly, Nurtleu said that Kazakhstan fully supports all the cooperation initiatives proposed by China and is willing to make positive contributions to the holding of the Tianjin summit.

*The growing high-level engagement between Kazakhstan and China highlights a recent trend among Central Asian countries to interact more diplomatically with China rather than Russia.*

## Other Developments

[Chairman of Halk Maslahaty of Turkmenistan arrives in Azerbaijan](#)

[Russian aid agency seeking to fill USAID gaps in former Soviet Union](#)

[The Moscow-Kabul Nexus: From Middle East to battle for Central Asia's future](#)

## Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

On 10 July 2025, Indian Naval Ship INS Tarkash [participated](#) in a Passing Exercise (PASSEX) with HS Psara of the Hellenic Navy. The PASSEX included a wide range of advanced naval activities such as validation of communication procedures, tactical manoeuvres, approaches for replenishment-at-sea, surface firing exercises, and helicopter cross-deck landings. This engagement provided a valuable opportunity for both naval forces to exchange best practices, refine procedures, and build mutual understanding in maritime operations.

*PASSEX between India and Greece is part of a broader push to improve military relations and to strengthen cooperation in the maritime domain and reflects the growing strategic partnership established in 2023.*

[According to the World Wildlife Fund](#), Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania lost up to \$142.8 million per year between 2015 and 2021 due to illegal fishing of shrimp and tuna. This loss does not account for the full scale of the problem—actual losses are likely significantly higher owing to the underreported and hard-to-detect nature of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. A large number of these IUU fishing vessels are Chinese-flagged, as China operates the world's largest distant-water fishing fleet and is widely recognised as the top global offender for illegal fishing.

*China's fishing activities have grown substantially in the IOR, and these boats potentially serve as the frontline assets for grey-zone operations. These fleets frequently exploit regulatory loopholes and operate in areas where legal frameworks are either weak or poorly enforced.*

### Other Developments

[Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Australia, undertook an official visit to China](#)

[India and Indonesia to hold the 44th iteration of the India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol \(IND-INDO CORPAT\)](#)



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