



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



INDIA'S PROXIMITY ARCHIVES

May 14, 2026

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South Asia:

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Volume IV, Issue 19



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 an independently funded 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., and Divya Rai, Research Associates. Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Sanket Joshi at sanket@dpg.org.in.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Delhi Policy Group as an Institution

Cover Images:

1. On May 6, 2026, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks in Beijing with Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman. Source: [MOFA PRC](#)
2. PM Modi holds a bilateral meeting with Vietnamese General Secretary and State President To Lam during his state visit to India on May 6, 2026. Source: [PMO Gallery](#)
3. 48th ASEAN Summit and Related Meetings took place on May 6-8, 2026, in Cebu, Philippines, under the theme "Navigating Our Future, Together". Source: [ASEAN](#)

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◇ <i>Israel deploys Iron Dome Air Defence System to the UAE</i>

South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman [visited China](#) from May 5-7 and held talks with Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Wang Yi stated that China is prepared to foster synergy between Belt and Road Initiative and Bangladesh's national development strategies. He further emphasised that China's relationships with Bangladesh and other South Asian nations are not directed towards any third party, nor should they be subject to external influence. As per a [news report](#), Bangladesh officially approached China for its involvement and backing for the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project. Meanwhile, Vikram Misri, India's Foreign Secretary, stated that India is working towards the gradual revival and reactivation of over 40 [bilateral mechanisms](#) for dialogue and cooperation with Bangladesh. These mechanisms have been largely dormant for the eighteen months of the interim government's tenure.

The newly elected BNP government in Bangladesh has declared its intention to cultivate balanced relations with major global powers. However, prevailing economic instability, geopolitical uncertainties, and pre-existing agreements that the interim administration established will likely complicate this objective.

The internal security in Pakistan remained in a precarious state. A major [terrorist](#) incident in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu district on May 9 resulted in the deaths of 15 police officers and injuries to three others. The news report indicates that the attack occurred while a major military operation against the TTP was underway in North Waziristan. Pakistan attributed the attacks to terrorist groups operating out of Afghanistan. Seven people, including two police officers, lost their lives in a [similar incident](#) on May 12 in the Lakki Marwat district.

The security situation in Pakistan will remain perilous unless the nation recognises that extremism within its borders is the source of insecurity and embraces a proactive policy in response.

Other Developments

[IMF clears Pakistan's next \\$1.2bn tranche](#)

[Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's Kathmandu visit postponed](#)

[Bangladesh, Pakistan vow stronger bilateral cooperation](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

The State Visit of General Secretary of the Communist Party and Vietnamese President, Tô Lâm to India concluded on May 7, 2026. This visit carried particular significance as [2026 marks](#) the 10th anniversary of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two nations. This was President Lam's second overseas visit after the National Assembly approved key state leadership appointments. The [three-day visit](#) resulted in the two sides elevating their ties to an [Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership](#) and signing a broad array of agreements spanning defence, technology, finance, and energy. The leaders further set an ambitious target of raising bilateral trade to US\$25 billion by 2030, emphasising balance, sustainability, and the removal of trade barriers to improve market access for each other's products.

The visit represents not just incremental progress but a decisive inflection point, marking the maturation of India–Vietnam ties into a higher strategic orbit. It reflects how both nations are recalibrating their partnership to meet the growing challenges and opportunities of the Indo-Pacific.

On [May 8](#), the 48th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit kicked off in the Philippines with energy security, food security, and the safety of ASEAN nationals worldwide as its main priorities. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Chair of ASEAN 2026 and Philippine President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos said the summit convenes at a time of considerable challenge, adding the increasingly volatile situation in the Middle East has impacted ASEAN nations, and profound uncertainties have threatened lifestyles, livelihoods and lives. A key dilemma of the ASEAN leaders expressed during the summit was the effect of US-Iran war on the region. While most delegates used cautious language, Thailand's Foreign Minister, Sihasak Phuanketkeow called for an indefinite ceasefire and secure shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. Leaders also discussed a draft contingency plan, including emergency fuel-sharing, a regional power grid, diversification of crude sources, promotion of electric vehicles, and exploration of civilian nuclear energy.

The Summit reinforced ASEAN's efforts to adapt in the face of global volatility, balancing institutional reform, economic resilience, and energy security.

On [May 5](#), Thailand formally ended a 2001 agreement with Cambodia that had provided a framework for resolving overlapping maritime claims in the Gulf of Thailand and for jointly managing offshore resources. Known as MoU 44, the pact had produced little progress despite five rounds of negotiations over two decades, yet it remained one of the few mechanisms for dialogue on the disputed waters. Both countries claim areas around several islands, including Koh Kood – a Thai-controlled tourist destination believed to hold significant untapped oil and gas reserves. Announcing the decision, Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul stressed that the termination “is unrelated and will not impact the current border situation,” while noting that talks on maritime boundaries would continue under other frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

In the broader context of Thailand–Cambodia relations, the termination of MoU 44 reflects a cooling of cooperation and entrenched mistrust. Although both governments stress that talks will continue under frameworks like the UNCLOS, the absence of a bilateral mechanism risks slowing negotiations and intensifying competition.

Other Developments

[Philippine senator seeks military support to block ICC arrest over Duterte drug war](#)

[Myanmar's political transition leaves ASEAN in a quandary](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On May 11, U.S. President Donald J. Trump [rejected Iran's peace proposal](#) sent via Pakistan, warning that the fragile ceasefire between Washington and Tehran was on "life support". He said that the U.S. cannot accept Iran's proposal as it did not include any commitment to dismantle its nuclear programme and reiterated that the U.S. would not allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons. Iran's Parliament Speaker [Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf](#) warned that the country's military will "teach a lesson" to any aggressor and urged the U.S. to accept Iran's 14-point proposal. Meanwhile, on May 10, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu informed that the U.S. and [Israel could re-engage Iran militarily](#) to take out enriched Uranium, dismantle remaining enrichment sites, and target Tehran's ballistic missile production sites.

The U.S.' rejection of the Iranian proposal indicates the failure of Pakistan-mediated talks in Islamabad. Washington and Tehran remain at odds on core strategic issues that could lead to renewed military conflict in the region.

During the ongoing war with Iran, Israel reportedly deployed the Iron Dome Air Defence System to the United Arab Emirates. This is a significant development because it marks the first time that Israel has sent Iron Dome batteries to another country, demonstrating [mutual trust between Tel Aviv and Abu Dhabi](#).

Israel's deployment of the Iron Dome Air Defence System to the UAE indicates a continued strengthening of the defence partnership between the two countries. Israel-UAE military interoperability serves the U.S.' demands of "burden sharing" among allies.

Other Developments

[Wang Yi Holds Talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi](#)

[How China and Russia keep Iran fighting – without firing a shot](#)

[President Putin offers to take Iranian uranium again, says no evidence of Tehran 'striving for nuclear weapons'](#)

[Oil settles higher as hopes of peace in the Middle East dwindle](#)

[Exclusive: Saudi Arabia launched covert attacks on Iran as regional war widened, sources say](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [May 12](#), Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks with Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon during his three-day state visit to China. Rahmon [signed](#) 50 deals expected to bring in US\$ 8 billion in investments. The Tajik leader also secured an assistance package worth US\$ 800 million from the Beijing-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, double the combined total of the bank's previous commitments to Dushanbe since it started operating in 2016. Following the talks, the two heads of state signed and issued the Treaty between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Tajikistan on Permanent Good-Neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation, as well as a joint statement on deepening their comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership in the new era.

The visit underscores Beijing's deepening role as Tajikistan's primary economic partner. Additionally, the signing of a Treaty on Permanent Good-Neighborliness elevates the relationship beyond economics, embedding it in a long-term strategic framework that strengthens China's influence in Central Asia.

On May 8, the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev signed the law 'On ratification of the Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland'. The agreement between the two nations was signed in Astana in April 2024 after the UK's exit from the European Union (Brexit), resulting in the need for new tailored legal framework as previous relations governed by EU agreements. The delay was not unusual.

As Central Asia's largest economy, Kazakhstan has now added Britain to its growing list of strategic partners, reinforcing Astana's long-standing multi-vector foreign policy.

Other Developments

[Tokayev and Mirziyoyev make surprise appearance in Moscow for Victory Day](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

INS Sagardhwani, the Indian Navy's oceanographic research vessel, [concluded](#) a port visit to Cam Ranh, Vietnam, from May 04-08, 2026, reinforcing the robust maritime and scientific partnership between India and Vietnam. Discussions explored avenues for deeper maritime engagement, professional exchanges, training cooperation, and scientific collaboration, marking a decade of the India-Vietnam Strategic Partnership. To advance oceanographic collaboration, scientists from NPOL (Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory) engaged with researchers from the Institute of Oceanography, Nha Trang, focusing on research partnerships, knowledge sharing, and capacity building.

INS Sagardhwani's visit to Cam Ranh exemplifies India-Vietnam's newly upgraded "Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership", blending oceanographic science, naval training, and defence cooperation to deepen maritime security in the Indo-Pacific.

The Indian Coast Guard [commissions](#) ICGS Achal, the newest addition to the Adanya-class Fast Patrol Vessel series, at Goa Shipyard Limited on May 9, 2026. Indigenously designed and built by Goa Shipyard Limited with over 50 percent domestic components, ICGS Achal will conduct a broad range of operations, including coastal surveillance, search and rescue, anti-smuggling, and marine pollution response. Its induction into service marks a meaningful stride in the Coast Guard's fleet expansion programme, further reinforcing India's maritime security architecture.

The induction of ICGS Achal into the Indian Coast Guard reflects India's growing seriousness about maritime domain awareness. It is a well-timed and strategically sound addition to India's maritime security apparatus, reflecting both operational need and industrial ambition.

Other Developments

[INS Sudarshini concluded an engaging port call at Mindelo Cape Verde](#)

[INS Sunayna, deployed under the IOS SAGAR initiative, concluded port call in Chattogram, Bangladesh](#)

[India hosts 10th edition of Indian Ocean Dialogue](#)

[UK will contribute drones, fighter jets and a warship to a joint mission aimed at safeguarding shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.](#)

[Commercial shipping through the Hormuz Strait increasingly operating under "dark" or "Emcon" conditions](#)



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