



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives

May 15, 2024



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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, 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.

Cover Image:

South Asia: Maldivian Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer during his visit to India on May 9, 2024, held a bilateral meeting with India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar. Source: [X/@MoosaZameer](#)

Southeast Asia: Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim with a Hamas delegation led by political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Qatar on May 12, 2024. Source: [PM Anwar/Official X Account](#)

East Asia: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul in Beijing on May 13, 2024. Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China](#)

Central Asia: On the sidelines of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council meeting, a private conversation between Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan and Russian President Vladimir Putin took place in the Kremlin on May 8. Source: [The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia](#)

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

During his [visit to India](#) on May 9, Maldivian Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer held a bilateral meeting with India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar and discussed bilateral and regional issues of mutual interest. In his opening remarks, Dr Jaishankar said, "as close and proximate neighbours, the development of our ties is obviously based on mutual interests and reciprocal sensitivity". Minister Moosa Zameer [assured that](#) his country is taking "proper action" to ensure that 'derogatory remarks' against India are not repeated. Meanwhile, India has extended [budgetary support](#) of USD 50 million to the Maldives in the form of treasury bills.

During the week, Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) witnessed [violent clashes](#) between police and activists of a rights movement over the issue of power tariffs and inflation. Four people, including one police official, were killed during the clashes. The Pakistan [army rangers are deployed](#) across the state to bring the situation under control. On May 14, the Awami Action Committee, an alliance of civil rights groups [called off the protest](#) following the announcement of approval of USD 82.6 million to help meet most of their demands by the Pakistani Government.

India's Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra [visited Bangladesh](#) on May 8-9, during which he called on the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud, and held a meeting with his counterpart Masud Bin Momen. The issues related to security, water, trade and investment, power and energy, defence, connectivity and sub-regional cooperation were discussed in the bilateral meeting. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to [visit India](#) in July.

Other Developments

[At least 300 dead as flash floods devastate Afghanistan](#)

[Pakistanis' own properties worth USD 12.5 billion in Dubai: Report](#)

[Sri Lanka to hold presidential election between Sept 17 and Oct 16: Election Commission](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

Malaysia's Prime Minister [Anwar Ibrahim made a state visit to Qatar](#) from May 12 to 14, 2024. During his visit, he held a meeting with the Hamas delegation led by political leader Ismail Haniyeh. PM Anwar expressed gratitude for the willingness of Hamas to release hostages and accept a peace plan. "Malaysia will remain committed to playing its role on the international level for an end to the attacks on Rafah," said Mr Anwar. The PM urged Israel to end its attacks on Palestinians, release prisoners and agree to the plan put forward by the Arab world.

On May 11, the Philippine Coast Guard reported that it had [deployed a ship to Sabina Shoal](#), where it accuses China of building an artificial island. The spokesperson of the Philippine Coast Guard stated that the reason for the deployment of the coast guard was to make sure it was able to prevent "China from carrying out a successful reclamation in Sabina Shoal". China's Foreign Ministry responded to these allegations characterising them as "groundless and pure rumor".

The Philippines' national security adviser, Adviser Eduardo Ano, has called for the [expulsion of a Chinese diplomat](#) over the alleged phone call leak row on May 10. He stated that China's embassy in Manila had orchestrated "repeated acts of engaging and dissemination of disinformation, misinformation and malinformation". The spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry, Lin Jian, has retaliated by warning that any "reckless moves" by the Philippines could only "backfire" on them. This comes after the Chinese Embassy in Manila shared a call recording between an individual claiming to be the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Western Command Chief and a Chinese diplomat. In the recording, the two sides agreed on four points under a "new model" for managing disputes in the West Philippine Sea (WPS). However, the authenticity of the video has not been verified yet.

Other Developments

[Chinese warships plan visit to Cambodia amid US worries](#)

[Myanmar junta plans October national census](#)

[Malaysia rebuffs US on Iran oil sales, says it recognises only UN sanctions](#)

East Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [May 13](#), Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul, who embarked on a two-day visit to China, marking the first such visit by a South Korean foreign minister to Beijing in over six years. [Experts suggest](#) that while the focal point is the upcoming China-Japan-South Korea trilateral leaders' summit scheduled for the end of the month, the trip also aims to improve South Korea's foreign relations with China. There has been a stronger desire to make "an improvement oriented adjustment in South Korea's foreign relations" deeming it conducive to regional security and stability.

After 18 months without a Chinese Ambassador in India, senior diplomat Xu Feihong arrived in Delhi to assume office as the [17th Ambassador to India](#) on May 10. In an interview with Chinese government-run media CGTN, Mr Xu said that his priority is to restore exchanges and cooperation in various fields and create favourable conditions for a sound and steady India-China relationship. He also emphasised that President Xi and Prime Minister Modi have agreed that China and India are "cooperation partners and not competitors" and that the two countries can be development opportunities and not threats and should serve as the fundamental guidelines for the growth of bilateral relations. After arriving in India, Xu Feihong [expressed gratitude](#) to the Ministry of External Affairs official who greeted him at the airport upon his arrival.

Japan has [expressed concern](#) about recent remarks by US officials justifying the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. During a US congressional meeting on May 8, Republican senator Lindsey Graham defended the atomic bombings while discussing support for Israel over the Palestinian situation. Additionally, Defense Secretary Austin suggested that the bombings were necessary to end the war in response to a question from Senator Graham. Responding to a reporter's question in Tokyo on May 10, Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa said, "I believe those remarks about Hiroshima and Nagasaki were not appropriate". Despite this, on May 12, [Senator Graham reiterated his comments](#), stating that the US made the right decision to drop the bombs to end their "existential-threat war" and, similarly, Israel must do whatever it takes to survive as a Jewish State. In response to these follow-up comments, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said, "I am extremely disappointed that such statements have been repeated. I will continue to work tirelessly to promote an accurate understanding of the reality of the atomic bombing, including that of Senator Graham". While the Japanese

government has reacted calmly to the comments, many warn of Japanese domestic sentiments turning against the United States.

Other Developments

[China Slams U.K. Arrests Over Hong Kong Spy Case](#)

[Russia's Putin To Visit China In First Foreign Trip Since Re-Election](#)

[Jaishankar On India-China Standoff: 'Abnormal Deployment Along LAC'](#)

[Philippines Wants Chinese Diplomats Expelled Amid South China Sea Row](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On May 13, India and Iran signed a Long-term Main Contract to develop the [Shahid Beheshti Port Terminal in Chabahar](#), Iran. Chabahar Port will enhance regional connectivity, serving as a gateway for India's trade with Afghanistan and the broader Central Asian region. In light of this, the US State Department spokesperson urged entities considering doing business with Iran to be aware of the [potential risks of sanctions](#). Iran described its [relationship with India as strategic](#) and called for greater bilateral and multilateral cooperation within BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

On May 10, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution called on the Security Council to [reconsider the Palestinian bid to become a full member state](#). The resolution was adopted with 143 votes in favour, 25 abstentions, and 9 votes against. It is to be noted that the [Security Council had rejected](#) Palestine's request to become a full member in April 2024. While supporting Palestine's full membership in the UN, India underscored the [importance of a two-state solution](#) to achieve lasting peace in the region.

Amidst the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, US officials indicated that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have amassed sufficient personnel near Rafah and could soon [expand operations in densely populated southern Gaza](#). Meanwhile, Secretary Blinken defended the decision to [withhold a US arms package for Israel](#), asserting that Tel Aviv lacked a credible plan to protect civilians in Rafah. The United Kingdom, however, [refused to halt arms exports to Israel](#), warning that this would strengthen Hamas.

Other Developments

[Iran FM, India ports minister hold talks in Tehran](#)

[China-Gulf free trade talks stall on Saudi industrial agenda, sources say](#)

[Israel warns U.S. that weapons pause could sabotage hostage talks](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On May 8, Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, engaged in talks with the Russian President Vladimir Putin, amidst escalating tensions between the "[estranged allies](#)". The meeting, though brief, shed light on the tension between the two nations. Only a brief transcript was released wherein President Putin said the bilateral trade between the two countries was growing. President Putin, while acknowledging regional security concerns, [made it clear](#) that these issues would not be discussed in the public part of their meeting.

On the [10th anniversary of signing the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union \(EEU\)](#), the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council was held in Moscow on May 8. Russian President Vladimir Putin participated in the summit, which was the first international meeting of the new fifth presidential term. A package of documents were signed including, in particular, the decision on 'Commencing Negotiations with Mongolia on Concluding an Interim Trade Agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union and Its Member States as the First Party, and Mongolia as the Second Party. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian praised the EEU, as he chaired a summit. "The Armenian side consistently advocates compliance with the fundamental principles underlying the EEU Treaty and expresses its readiness for active interaction with all member states in the interests of further development of the chosen paradigm of economic cooperation," added Pashinian, whose country assumed the bloc's rotating presidency in January.

On [May 10](#), Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov and Foreign Minister of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan began negotiations. Welcoming his counterparts, Kazakh Foreign Minister Murat Nurtleu emphasised Kazakhstan's readiness to conscientiously carry out the duties of the excellent office without assuming the role of a mediator. However, [after two days of negotiations](#), officials in Yerevan and Baku said, "Armenia and Azerbaijan negotiators continue to disagree on key provisions of a bilateral peace treaty". The statements did not specify the differences. Nor did they indicate whether Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and his Azerbaijani counterpart, Jeyhun Bayramov, had made any progress toward a peace deal.

Other Developments

[Kazakh President Signs Decree on Measures to Liberalize Economy](#)

[Russia's S-300ps In Tajikistan Confirm Combat Readiness](#)

[Thousands of Armenians Demand Prime Minister Resign Over Border Villages Dispute With Azerbaijan](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

As part of the operational deployment of the Eastern Fleet, the Indian Navy ship INS Kiltan arrived at [Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam](#) on May 12, 2024 . Meanwhile, IN Ships Delhi and Shakti arrived at Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. The ships will participate in a Maritime Partnership Exercise with the host navies on completion of their visit.

On May 12, [INS Delhi and INS Shakti on a South China Sea deployment](#) arrived at Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. Both the ships are set to participate in a Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX)/ PASSEX at sea with ships of the Royal Malaysian Navy. This is aimed to enhance the degree of interoperability between the two Navies, which was reiterated during the recently concluded MILAN 2024 and Ex Samudra Lakshmana 2024.

India Port Global Limited (IPGL) and Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) of Iran signed a [long-term Main contract](#) for the development of Shahid Beheshti Port Terminal, Chabahar. Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and AYUSH, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal was present at the signing ceremony. The signing of the Long-term Contract highlights the importance of Chabahar as a gateway for trade with Afghanistan and broader Central Asian countries.

Other developments

[EU Naval Force Operation ATALANTA informed, "Houthis extend attacks on shipping to wider Indian Ocean"](#)

[India and the US held second dialogue on Africa.](#)



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