



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives

May 22, 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: Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong held first ministerial dialogue with Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Dr. Hasan Mahmud on May 22 in Dhaka. [Source: X/ @SenatorWong](#)

East Asia: President of Russia Vladimir Putin with President of China Xi Jinping on a state visit to Beijing, China on May 16, 2024. (Source: [MFA Russia/Official X Account](#))

Central Asia: Under the chairmanship of Kazakhstan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Murat Nurtleu convened the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers on May 20-21, 2024. Source: [The Shanghai Cooperation Organization](#)

Indian Ocean Region: INS Shakti and INS Delhi participated in Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX)/ PASSEX with the Royal Malaysian Navy ships during its South China Sea Deployment on May 16, 2024. Source: [Indian Navy's Twitter Handle](#)

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Contents

South Asia

Shreyas Deshmukh 1

Southeast Asia

Anshita Shukla 3

East Asia

Jayantika Rao T.V. 4

West Asia

Sanket Joshi..... 5

Central Asia

Jayantika Rao T.V. 6

Indian Ocean Region

Divya Rai..... 7

South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' [won a vote of confidence](#) in Parliament on May 20, his fourth within 18 months of taking office. The vote became necessary after a coalition partner, the Janata Samajbadi Party (JSP), [withdrew its support](#) and quit the coalition government. The opposition Nepali Congress boycotted the voting process.

The Charter of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) [entered into force](#) on 20 May 2024. It paves the way for external partnerships and admission of observers and new members. The Charter was signed by the Heads of State and Government of the BIMSTEC member States during the Fifth Summit held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 30 March 2022.

According to the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) of Bangladesh, [illegal heavy weapons](#) are smuggled into the country through the Myanmar border by separatist groups based in the Rohingya camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf. The law enforcement forces on May 15 seized a large cache of firearms, including military-grade weapons, from a hideout of Myanmar's armed group, the Arakan Salvation Army (Arsa).

During a visit to Bangladesh on May 21-22, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong held the first ministerial dialogue with the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, Dr Hasan Mahmud. In a [Joint Statement](#), both sides "reaffirmed their support for sovereignty and territorial integrity in the **Indo-Pacific**, democratic values, human rights, freedom of navigation and overflight, and the peaceful resolution of disputes".

The Maldives accused India of taking an [unauthorised sortie](#) by an Indian Navy helicopter. The India High Commission in Male dismissed the allegations saying Indian aviation platforms always operated according to the "agreed procedure and due authorisation". Meanwhile, the Indian External Affairs Ministry on May 18 said it was [ready to provide training](#) to Maldivian pilots to operate the Dornier aircraft if the Maldives government makes a formal request.

Other Developments

[India to expand overseas port operations with Mongla terminal in Bangladesh](#)

[Sri Lanka in talks with India to set up small arms manufacturing unit: Premitha Tennakoon](#)

[4 suspected ISIS terrorists from Sri Lanka arrested at Ahmedabad airport](#)

[The Pakistan Army successfully conducted the test-launch of Fatah-II guided rocket system that has a range of 400 kilometres.](#)

[Three Afghans, three Spanish tourists killed in Bamyan shooting in Afghanistan](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

Cambodia and China commenced their [annual military drill "Golden Dragon"](#) on May 16, 2024. The 15-day military exercise will involve the participation of 2,000 troops, including 760 Chinese military personnel, 14 warships – three from China – two helicopters and 69 armoured vehicles and tanks. The drills are taking place at a remote training centre in central Kampong Chhnang province and in the sea off Preah Sihanouk province. Cambodian army spokesman Thong Solimo stated that the 2024 exercises were the "[biggest ever of their kind](#)".

Myanmar's army chief, [Min Aung Hlaing, held meetings with top ASEAN officials](#) on May 15 in the capital Naypyitaw. The military chief met with ASEAN special envoy Alounkeo Kittikhoun and Secretary-General Kao Kim Hourn. The two sides discussed "the best cooperation of Myanmar in ASEAN, the conditions of Myanmar's participation in ASEAN meetings", as reported by the Global New Light of Myanmar. [UN human rights chief](#), Mr Volker Turk, expressed alarm over the resurgence of violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state and warned of further "atrocities" on May 19.

Other Developments

[The Philippines will buy 5 patrol boats from Japan amid sea tension](#)

[Musk, Indonesia health minister, launch Starlink in Bali for health sector](#)

[Singapore PM Lawrence Wong vows to lead in 'own way' at inauguration](#)

East Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

Russian President Vladimir Putin concluded a [two-day visit to China](#) on May 17, 2024. He met with President Xi Jinping of China and Li Qiang, Premier of the State Council. He attended the opening ceremony of the 2024-2025 China-Russia Cultural Year, a special concert marking the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Russia, and the 8th China-Russia Expo. The two sides agreed to "further deepen mutual military trust and cooperation" through expansion of military exercises, regular maritime and air patrols, and strengthening bilateral and multilateral coordination, according to the [joint statement](#).

On [May 20](#), Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with the Foreign Minister of China, Wang Yi, on the sidelines of the SCO in Astana, Kazakhstan. During their meeting, the ministers highlighted the importance of the increasing engagements which have deepened the comprehensive partnership relations and strategic interaction between the two nations. Furthermore, the ministers acknowledged the joint efforts of member states in upholding peace and stability in Eurasia. They also addressed various pressing issues including the Middle East process, developments in the Red Sea region and the Korean Peninsula.

Newly sworn-in President Lai Ching-te called on Beijing "[to cease their political and military intimidation against Taiwan](#)" in his inaugural speech on May 20. In his remarks, Lai broadcasted a message of peace and declared that a "glorious era of Taiwan's democracy has arrived," describing the island as an "important link" in a "global chain of democracies", while reiterating a determination to defend its sovereignty. When Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin was asked about President Lai's remarks, [Wenbin stated](#), "Taiwan independence leads nowhere. No matter what banner or pretext the separatists use, "Taiwan independence" is doomed to failure".

Other Developments

[Japan, South Korea, China Seek To Ease Friction at Trilateral Summit](#)

[China Is Sending Its Highest-Level Delegation to North Korea since 2019 to Kick off a 'Friendship Year'](#)

[China Announces Sanctions on Boeing, Two US Defence Contractors for Arms Sales to Taiwan](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed shock at the death of Iran's President [Dr. Seyed Ebrahim Raisi](#) and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian who died in a helicopter crash in the province of East Azerbaijan on May 20. Meanwhile, on May 21, the 'International Criminal Court' (ICC) prosecutor filed [arrest warrant applications against Hamas militants](#) Yahya Sinwar, Mohammed Diab Ibrahim Al-Masri, and Ismail Haniyeh bearing criminal responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The ICC prosecutor has also filed arrest warrant applications against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant.

In a statement, the US State Department categorically rejected the ICC's ["shameful" equivalence of Israel with Hamas](#) and its application to arrest Israel's Prime Minister and Defence Minister. On the other hand, European Union's Foreign and Security Policy Chief Josep Borrell called upon Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to [implement the court's rulings](#).

On May 19, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan met Israeli leaders in Jerusalem. During the meeting, the two sides discussed the war in Gaza, including ongoing diplomatic efforts to secure the release of Israeli hostages as well as the [shared objective of defeating Hamas](#). Earlier, Jake Sullivan met with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohamed bin Salman in Dammam to discuss a comprehensive vision for an integrated Middle East.

Other Developments

[Russian FM blames US sanctions for Iran President's copter crash](#)

[Blinken suggests Arab countries to play instrumental role in post-war Gaza](#)

[US and Iran held indirect talks this week on avoiding more attacks](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

The foreign ministers of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states convened for a [Council of Foreign Ministers](#) meeting in Astana on May 21. India's representative [Secretary \(Economic Relations\) of the Ministry of External Affairs](#) Dammu Ravi discussed preparations for the upcoming SCO Council of Heads of State Summit. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi urged the SCO countries to uphold the "[Shanghai Spirit](#)" of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for cultural diversity and common development. He emphasized the need to strengthen the organization to safeguard common interests and uphold international fairness and justice.

China's Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, travelled to Tajikistan and Kazakhstan before participating in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs from May 18 to 21. During his visit to Tajikistan (May 18-19), Wang Yi met with the President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon and held talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs Muhridin. The [two foreign ministers](#) signed cooperation documents between the two foreign ministries. Minister Muhridin stated that "China is an important strategic partner of Tajikistan," and given the complex and ever-changing regional situation, "Tajikistan is willing to work with China to implement global security initiatives and respond to security challenges jointly. On [May 20](#), Wang Yi held talks with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Nurtreu of Kazakhstan in Astana. This meeting is their second meeting in two months. During their meeting, the two sides emphasised that in the turbulent international situation, they must firmly safeguard the international system with the United Nations as the core and the international order based on international law, implement global development initiatives, global security initiatives and global civilisation initiatives, and unequivocally oppose unilateralism and hegemonic bullying behaviour to promote global governance in a more fair and reasonable direction.

Other Developments

[Kazakh President Ratifies Treaty on Allied Relations with Uzbekistan](#)

[France Blames Azerbaijan for New Caledonia Violence: Unpacking Their Spat](#)

[After India & Pakistan, SCO Set to Welcome 9th Member; Held Its 1st-Ever Joint Military Drills With China](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

The 2nd edition of the India–Australia–Indonesia [Trilateral Maritime Security Workshop \(TMSW\)](#) was conducted from May 15-17, at INS Dronacharya, Kochi. The theme of the workshop was 'Indian Ocean Region: Collaborative Efforts to Enhance Regional Maritime Security'. The workshop was conducted under the aegis of Headquarters Southern Naval Command and witnessed the participation of delegates from the three participating Navies.

In a demonstration of India's commitment to its 'Act East' and 'SAGAR' (Security and Growth for All in the Region) policies, three Indian Navy ships – INS Delhi, INS Shakti, and INS Kiltan – arrived in Manila, Philippines, on May 19th as part of their operational deployment to the South China Sea region. The Indian navy ships are set to conduct a [Maritime Partnership Exercise \(MPX\)](#) with the Philippine Navy off the western coast of the Philippines.

Prior to their arrival in Manila, on May 16th, the Indian Naval Ships participated in a similar [MPX or Passage Exercise \(PASSEX\)](#) with their counterparts from the Royal Malaysian Navy, KD Kelantan and KD Keris.

On May 17, the Indonesian naval ship KRI Sultan Thaya Syaifuddin and Maritime Patrol Aircraft P-8305 arrived at Port Blair to participate in the [42nd edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol](#) (IND-INDO CORPAT).

Other Developments

[Houthi strike M/T Wind a Panamanian-flagged, Greek-owned and operated oil tanker.](#)

[Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra reviewed the India-UK 'Roadmap 2030 during his two-day visit to London.](#)

[30th edition of bilateral exercise CARAT 2024 between US-Indonesia was conducted in the Indian Ocean Region](#)



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