



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives

May 29, 2024



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Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003

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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:

East Asia: Prime Minister Kishida of Japan, with Mr. YOON Suk Yeol, President of the Republic of Korea, and Mr. Li Qiang, Premier of the People's Republic of China at the Ninth Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Summit. Source: [Prime Minister's Office of Japan/Official Website](#)

West Asia: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez announces recognition of Palestine on May 28, 2024. Source: [Official X Handle/Pedro Sanchez](#)

Central Asia: Joint photo session for heads of delegations took part in the meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government, May 24, 2024. Source: [The Russian Gov website](#)

Indian Ocean Region: Operation Atalanta confirms the liberation of the Liberian-flagged Merchant Vessel Basilisk. Operation Atalanta is fully committed to maritime security in its Area of Operations. Source: [EUNAVFOR ATALANTA](#)

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Russia's Special Presidential envoy for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov said that the Taliban "can be removed" from the list of [designated terrorist organizations](#). Kabulov noted on May 27 that the Taliban had "come a long way towards being recognized" since seizing power. "But there are still a few hurdles to overcome, after which the Russian leadership will make a decision." Russia also [invited the Taliban](#) to attend a June 5-8 St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.

Six years after he lost the [party president's office](#) due to a Pakistan Supreme Court decision in the Panama Papers case, former prime minister Nawaz Sharif re-elected as the PML-N president in a general council meeting of the ruling party on May 28. In his speech he touched upon [his legacy](#), and historical developments such as [Kargil war](#). He said "On May 28, 1998, Pakistan carried out five nuclear tests. After that, Vajpayee Saheb came here and made an agreement with us. But we violated that agreement...it was our fault."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May 23 while speaking at a meeting with her 14-party alliance, alleged that a plot is on to [carve out](#) "a Christian state like East Timor" taking parts from Bangladesh and Myanmar. She also claimed that she was offered a [hassle-free re-election](#) in the January 7 polls if she allowed a foreign country to build an airbase in Bangladesh territory. But she did not mention the country's name.

Other Developments

[Nepal Government unveils USD 14 billion budget for fiscal 2024-25](#)

[India, China have agreed to cooperate in paying in local currency for imports: Maldives](#)

[India will deal with the 4 ISIS suspects arrested in Gujarat, says Sri Lankan govt](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

On May 27, the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs reported that China informed the Philippines of its [unilateral imposition of a fishing ban](#) in "areas of the South China Sea north of the 12 degrees North latitude" that would last till September 16. This directly "contravenes the understanding between Philippines President Marcos Jr. and China's President Xi Jinping to manage differences through diplomacy and dialogue and to de-escalate the situation at sea," the foreign affairs statement says. The Philippines has officially lodged a diplomatic protest against the ban.

The Philippines inaugurated a [new Coast Guard station](#) on Itbayat Island near Taiwan on May 24. The National Security Adviser of the Philippines, Eduardo Ano, stated that the station "is a strategic move to enhance maritime domain awareness and strengthen the security measures along Luzon Strait". However, the Philippine Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro has maintained that disputes between China and Taiwan are an "[internal matter](#)".

Other Developments

[Cambodia defends China-backed canal project questioned by Vietnam](#)

[Thai PM Srettha avoids suspension as court takes up ethics case](#)

East Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The [ninth trilateral meeting](#) between Japan, South Korea and China, the first in four years, was convened in Seoul on May 27. South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Chinese Premier Li Qiang agreed to put aside their bilateral differences and revive the high-level dialogue meetings. The leaders agreed to [enhance collaboration](#) on cross-cutting issues in six areas including economy and trade, sustainable development, public health, science and technology, disaster and safety management, and people-to-people exchanges, the leaders also announced resumption of negotiations for a trilateral free trade agreement.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that China and the United States held [consultations on maritime affairs](#) on May 28. The two sides exchanged views on the maritime situation and agreed to maintain communication and avoid misunderstandings and miscalculations. The Foreign Ministry of China urged Washington to not intervene in disputes between China and its neighbours, and to not "use the sea to control China".

North Korea's second [spy satellite exploded shortly after lift-off](#) on May 27 in a setback for leader Kim Jong Un's hopes to operate multiple satellites to monitor the United States and South Korea better. The state-run Korean Central News Agency reported that the latest launch involved a "new-type satellite carrier rocket" without specifying the model. The [North's official Korean Central News Agency \(KCNA\)](#) said the rocket blew up during a first-stage flight soon after lift-off due to a suspected engine problem, with debris falling into the Yellow Sea just two minutes after the launch. KCNA cited the unidentified vice director of the National Aerospace Technology Administration as saying that a preliminary examination showed that the explosion was related to the reliability of operation of the newly developed liquid oxygen-petroleum engine. The [latest rocket](#) ran on a newly developed engine that burns liquid oxygen and petroleum fuel, allegedly sourced from Russia.

Other Developments

[Hong Kong makes first known arrests under Article 23 Security Law](#)

[Taiwan opposition passes Contentious Bill to empower legislature](#)

[Taiwan to work with US to face 'Authoritarian Expansionism': President Lai](#)

[Rare spat shows China and North Korea are still at odds on nuclear weapons](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

Spain, Ireland, and Norway formally [recognised Palestine](#) on May 28. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez stressed that Madrid's decision has a single goal and that is to help Israel and Palestine achieve peace. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned the recognition of Palestine as a "[reward for terrorism](#)" and as complicit in inciting genocide against Jews and war crimes. The Arab League welcomed the recognition of Palestine and [urged other nations to follow suit](#).

Israel Defence Forces (IDF) [eliminated Hamas militants in a targeted strike](#) in Rafah in southern Gaza on May 26. However, following the strike, an unexpected and unintended fire erupted, killing civilians. IDF spokesperson informed that the military was investigating the incident, including the possibility that weapons stored by Hamas in the vicinity may have ignited. A spokesperson for the White House National Security Council described the incident as "heartbreaking", but clarified that it [did not cross a red line](#) that would force changes in the US's support for Israel.

To deepen China's relations with the Arab world, Beijing will host the 10th Ministerial Conference of the [China-Arab States Cooperation Forum](#) on May 30. At the opening ceremony of this forum, President Xi Jinping will give a keynote address. Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Tunisian President Kais Saied, and the [UAE's President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed](#) are expected to attend.

Other Developments

[India, UAE conclude meeting on India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor](#)

[West divided over ICC arrest warrants for PM Netanyahu, Gallant](#)

[Upcoming China-Arab states cooperation forum highlights solidarity, leading relations to new stage](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

Russia and Uzbekistan on May 27 [signed an accord](#) for Moscow to 'design, deliver and construct' a small nuclear power plant in the Central Asian country. Russian President Vladimir Putin held talks with the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev wherein several intergovernmental and interdepartmental documents were signed during the latter's [state visit](#) to Uzbekistan. President Mirziyoyev hailed the project as "vital" in remarks after the talks, noting that Uzbekistan has "its own large reserves of uranium". President Putin, in turn, vowed to "do everything in order to work effectively on Uzbekistan's (nuclear energy) market."

On [May 24](#), a meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. The agenda included discussing the expansion of trade and economic cooperation between the participating countries and measures to [enhance interaction in key sectors](#) - energy, infrastructure, industry, and others.

On [May 24](#), the Press service of Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev, who heads a commission on border delimitation, announced that Azerbaijan's State Border Service had taken control of four villages on the border with Armenia. Furthermore, starting from May 24, Armenia and Azerbaijan will [withdraw troops](#) from three villages in the Tavush Region and entrust border guards with protecting these areas.

Other Developments

[Russia-Azerbaijan ties serve as model for other states – Azerbaijan's senior MP](#)

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

[UN Secretary-General to Attend SCO Council of Heads of State in July](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

The European Union's [Operation ATALANTA](#) successfully freed the Liberian-flagged cargo ship M/V Basilisk from suspected Somali pirates in the Indian Ocean on May 24. The ship was attacked by the suspected pirates on May 23 while sailing approximately 380 nautical miles east of Mogadishu, Somalia, heading north. The EU naval force responded by sending one of its warships and boarding the Basilisk from a helicopter on the night of May 23 to free the vessel. Operation Atalanta confirmed that all 17 crew members are safe, and the ship has been secured by one of its vessels.

The [15th Indian Navy-Republic of Singapore Navy Staff Talks](#) were hosted by the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) in Singapore from May 23-25. The talks were co-chaired by Rear Admiral Rahul Vilas Gokhale, Assistant Chief of Personnel (Human Resource Development) from the Indian Navy, and Rear Admiral Augustine Lim, Head of Naval Operations from the RSN. The discussions focused on enhancing interoperability, training, exploring new avenues for cooperation, and consolidating ongoing engagements between the two navies towards ensuring maritime safety and collaborative pursuit of maritime security.

From May 20-24, Operation Atalanta, the European Union's naval force, conducted the joint multi-agency exercise [USALAMA BAHARINI](#) for the first time in collaboration with Kenya. The exercise witnessed the participation of the Kenyan Navy and the Kenyan Coast Guard Service. The exercise was jointly organized by EUNAVFOR ATALANTA, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and the State Department for Shipping and Maritime Affairs of the Republic of Kenya.

Other Developments

[The Japan Self-Defense Forces will participate for the first time in the U.S. military's Valiant Shield exercise.](#)

[Indian Naval Ship Kiltan arrived at Muara, Brunei on 25 May 24, as a part of Indian Navy's operational deployment to South China Sea.](#)



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