



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives

August 14, 2024



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Delhi Policy Group

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www.delhipolicygroup.org



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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: India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar held bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister of Maldives Moosa Zameer in Male on August 10, 2024. Source: [Avas](#)

Southeast Asia: Australia-Canada-US-Phillipines held joint maritime cooperation activity in the West Philippine Sea on August 8, 2024. Source: [Official X Handle/Armed Forces of the Phillipines](#)

East Asia: Japan and Indonesia signed IJEPA protocol amendement on August 8, 2024. Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs Indonesia](#)

Indian Ocean Region: The 10th edition of India- Sri Lanka Joint Military Exercise MITRA SHAKTI commenced at Army Training School, Maduru Oya, Sri Lanka. Source: [Ministry of Defence Government of India/PIB](#)

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

The External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. S Jaishankar [visited Maldives](#) from August 9-11. He called on President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu, where they jointly inaugurated India's Line of Credit (LoC)-assisted project. President Muizzu appreciated India's continued developmental assistance and reaffirmed his commitment to deepen the India-Maldives relationship. Dr. Jaishankar also held bilateral discussions with Maldivian Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer and met the Minister for Defence, Minister of Finance, Governor of the Maldives Monetary Authority and a delegation from the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) led by its President Abdulla Shahid. India and Maldives signed MoUs on capacity building of additional 1000 Maldivian civil servants in India and on introduction of UPI in Maldives. MoUs were exchanged on six High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) under grant assistance by India. The Maldives has proposed establishing a [Free Trade Agreement](#) (FTA) with India.

Foreign Secretary of India, Vikram Misri paid an official [visit to Nepal](#) on August 11-12 during which he held bilateral meeting with the Foreign Secretary of Nepal Sewa Lamsal and reviewed the progress made in various bilateral initiatives and developmental projects. FS Misri was also called on President Ramchandra Paudel and Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli and other senior government officials. Nepal Foreign Minister Rana in discussion with FS Misri [raised issues](#) related air connectivity, border trade and finalisation of Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project.

On August 8, Seventeen members of Bangladesh's interim government [took their oaths](#) at a ceremony in Dhaka. Nobel laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus was sworn-in as the head of the caretaker government. His portfolio encompasses transport, land, defence, aviation and energy. Bangladesh Army Chief Gen. Zaman said that the armed forces [will provide all possible support](#) to the new government. Syed Refaat Ahmed, Bangladesh's [new chief justice](#) was sworn in on August 11 as his predecessor Obaidul Hassan, stepped down following protesters demand. Meanwhile more than [200 attacks](#) on Hindus and other minorities were reported across the country. Massive [rallies of Hindus](#) were seen in Dhaka and Chittagong on August 10 demanding protection amid widespread vandalism and attacks on Hindu temples, homes and businesses. The BNP announced [sit-in programmes](#) at its offices across the

country on August 14-15, demanding that former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her accomplices be brought to justice.

Other Developments

[Blast In Kabul's Hazara Area Kills At Least 1, Injures 11](#)

[UN warns IS Afghanistan branch growing in strength](#)

[Ex DG ISI Lt Gen Faiz arrested, court martial process begins in Pakistan](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The Coast Guards of the [Philippines and Vietnam](#) conducted their first joint training exercises near the West Philippine Sea on August 9, 2024. The drills featured a simulated search and rescue operation and the use of water cannon to repel a mock threat. Vietnam's 90-metre-long ship CSB 8002 and Philippine offshore patrol vessel BRP Gabriela Silang participated in the exercise. The commanding officer of BRP Gabriela Silang, Lawrence Roque, stated that the "exercise is more on the humanitarian side".

[China conducted a joint combat patrol](#) in the sea and air space to test "strike capabilities" near Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea on August 7, 2024. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China stated that the patrols "tested the reconnaissance and early warning, rapid mobility, and joint strike capabilities of theatre troops". On the same day, the Philippines [conducted joint sea and air exercises](#) with the United States, Canada and Australia in the West Philippine Sea. The exercises were aimed at showcasing "collective commitment to strengthen regional and international cooperation in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific".

China's special envoy, Deng Xijun, held a meeting with Myanmar's Junta chief General Min Aung Hlaing in Naypyidaw on August 8, 2024. The two sides held talks on "internal peace processes in Myanmar, peace and stability measures in the border region", according to [Myanmar state media](#). The Myanmar senior general "explained the implementation of objectives and a five-point roadmap in order to ensure peace, and stability" to the Chinese envoy.

Other Developments

[Philippines says actions of China air force 'illegal' and 'reckless'](#)

[Indonesia holds first Cabinet meeting in planned new capital Nusantara](#)

[Philippines, China 'provisional agreement' over Second Thomas Shoal subject to future review, official says](#)

East Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [August 8](#), Japan and Indonesia signed the Protocol of Amendments to the Indonesia-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (IJEPA) virtually. The IJEPA agreement is Indonesia's first bilateral economic agreement implemented since July 1, 2008. Indonesia's Minister of Trade, Zulkifli Hasan, said, "This strategic economic agreement encompasses several crucial aspects, namely Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, Electronic Commerce, Movement of Natural Persons (MNP), Cooperation in Intellectual Property, and Government Procurement. The agreement will improve market access for Indonesian export products to Japan across 112 tariff lines. Regarding trade in goods, he noted that the protocol encourages Japan to facilitate a wide range of Indonesian goods, including marine products, fruits, foods and beverages, and organic chemicals, to access its market. The [protocol is expected](#) to increase the total value of Indonesia's exports to Japan to 35.9 billion USD by 2028, or about 58% higher than the 20.8 billion USD recorded last year.

On [August 13](#), a US Army intelligence analyst pleaded guilty to charges of conspiring to sell US military secrets to China. In March, Korbein Schultz was charged with conspiracy to disclose national defence information, exporting defence articles and technical data without a license, and bribery of a public official. A document discussing the lessons learned by the Army from the Russia-Ukraine war that it would apply in Taiwan's defence, documents relating to Chinese military tactics, and a document relating to US military satellites were among the items that were collected and sent by Schultz.

Other Developments

[US Officials To Travel To China For Economic Meetings](#)

[U.S. and South Korea Start Joint Military Exercises Next Week](#)

[Analysts: Hasina's exit sets back India-Bangladesh ties, China could gain](#)

[China's Large, Twin-Engine Transport Drone Completes Maiden Flight](#)

[Concerns Over Central Asia Diplomacy After Kishida Cancels Trip](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

President Biden held a telephone conversation with the leaders of France, Germany, Italy, and Britain on August 12 to [discuss tensions in the Middle East](#). Amidst fears of a potential Iranian attack on Israel, they reaffirmed their support for Israel's defence and security. The US approved the sale of [F-15 fighter jets and other military equipment to Israel](#) worth USD 20 billion that is expected to be delivered by 2029. Meanwhile, Israel and Hamas are likely to resume negotiations regarding a [ceasefire and hostage deal](#) on August 15. US mediators reportedly described these negotiations as the last chance to release the hostages and avoid a regional escalation of the conflict with Iran's involvement.

Around 100 Palestinians were killed in an [Israeli airstrike on a Gaza city school](#) on August 10. The Israeli military informed that the death toll had been inflated and that [19 Hamas militants were killed](#) during the airstrike. In another development, Israeli Minister of National Security [Itamar Ben Gvir](#) entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (Temple Mount) and rejected the status quo, which prohibits Jews from praying at the holy site.

Continuing to deepen [Iran's strategic partnership with Russia](#), Tehran is expected to deliver the Fath-360 close range ballistic missile system to the country. Reacting sharply, the [US warned of a "swift and severe response"](#) should Iran transfer ballistic missiles to Russia, adding that the Russian-Iran alliance threatens European security and illustrates Iran's destabilising influence beyond the Middle East.

Other Developments

[The United States Stands Firmly Against Ben Gvir's Visit to the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount](#)

[Only Gaza ceasefire will delay retaliation, say Iranian officials](#)

[China says Hamas chief's assassination undermined Gaza cease-fire talks](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

Central Asian leaders gathered for the [6th Consultative Meeting of Heads of State of Central Asia](#), with host Kazakhstan's President Kasym-Jomart Tokayev emphasising regional cooperation in his opening remarks on August 9, 2024. Tokayev said, "Through joint efforts, significant progress has been made in the development of our format since the first meeting in Astana in 2018. The outcomes of the past five summits, where important decisions to deepen regional cooperation were made, are clear evidence of this". [Based on the outcomes](#) of the meeting, a joint statement, a Roadmap for the development of regional cooperation for 2025-2027 and Plan of industrial cooperation of Central Asian states for 2025-2027 were among the few documents adopted.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida [held phone talks](#) with Tajik President Emomali Rahmon and Turkmen President Serdar Berdimuhamedov on August 12. Kishida was scheduled to visit Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia from August 9 to August 12 and attend the first summit between Japan and five Central Asian countries, including Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, on August 9. However, Kishida cancelled his trip to Central Asia after the Japan Meteorological Agency issued emergency information on the increased risk of a huge Nankai Trough earthquake. While many within the government and the LDP say the decision was understandable as the prime minister prioritised responding to the higher quake risk, some regret that [Japan missed a significant opportunity](#) to increase its presence in Central Asia, the backyard of China and Russia.

Other Developments

[CSTO law enforcers meet in Tajikistan](#)

[Tokayev Outlines Central Asia's Vision for Regional Cooperation and Growth](#)

[Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan Aim for \\$10 Billion Trade Volume](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

The [10th edition of the bilateral military exercise](#) 'Mitra Shakti' between India and Sri Lanka commenced on August 12, 2024, in Maduru Oya, Sri Lanka. The exercise is scheduled to be conducted from August 12th to 25th, 2024. It aims to enhance joint military capability of both sides to undertake counter insurgency operations in a sub-conventional scenario under Chapter VII of the United Nations Mandate. The annual Mitra Shakti exercise started in 2012 and is held alternately in India and Sri Lanka. The last edition was conducted in Pune in November 2023.

[Australia's Indo-Pacific Endeavour \(IPE\)](#) 2024 has commenced this week in Sri Lanka, marking the start of a significant regional engagement initiative that will span five months and involve 14 countries across Southeast Asia and the Northeast Indian Ocean. This year's activities will deepen diplomatic and defence ties with nations including Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Maldives, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. The key components of IPE 2024 include military exercises, training sessions, and cultural activities, and humanitarian assistance, disaster relief.

Other Developments

[6th India-Australia Maritime Security Dialogue was held on August 13, 2024](#)

[INS Tabar conducted a Maritime Partnership Exercise \(MPX\) with the German Navy off the Kiel Cannal](#)

[Indian Navy's frontline frigate, INS Tabar, arrived at London Harbour on August 7, 2024, for a four-day visit](#)

[The first-ever Southern African Development Community \(SADC\) Maritime Exercise is set to take place in October 2024](#)



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