



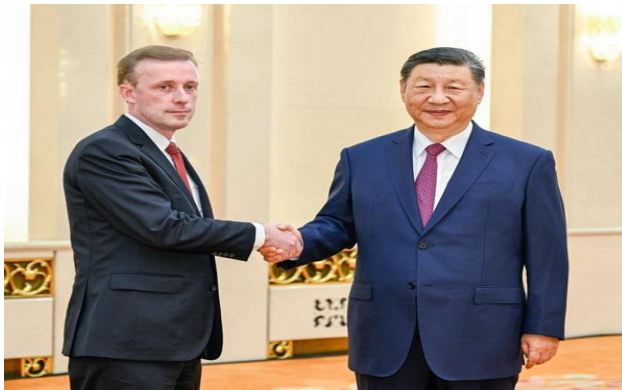
# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## India's Proximity Archives

### September 4, 2024



Volume II, Issue 36 | September 4, 2024

**Delhi Policy Group**

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

[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://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](mailto:sanket@dpg.org.in).

### Cover Image:

**South Asia-** Representatives from India, Maldives, Mauritius, Sri Lanka at the signing ceremony of the Charter and MoU for establishment of Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) Secretariat on August 30, 2024, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

(Source: [X/@IndiainSL](#))

**Southeast Asia-** Vietnamese Defence Minister Phan Van Giang with Philippine counterpart Gilberto Teodoro in Manila on August 30, 2024. (Source: [Department of National Defense of Philippines/Official X Account](#))

**East Asia-** President of People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping met with Assistant to the U.S. President for National Security Affairs, Jake Sullivan at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, on August 29, 2024. Source: [Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

**Indian Ocean Region-** Indian Navy's P-8I aircraft touched down at Air Base 125 Istres-Le Tubé for Exercise Varuna with the French Navy: Source: [India Navy Twitter Account](#)

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## South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval [visited Colombo](#) from 29-30 August 2024 to sign the founding documents of the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC). Following discussions at the 6th NSA level meeting of the CSC held in December 2023 in Mauritius, the Charter & MoU for the establishment of the CSC Secretariat were signed in Colombo on 30 August 2024 by India, Maldives, Mauritius and Sri Lanka. During the ceremony, NSA Ajit Doval emphasised the importance of collective efforts in addressing traditional, non-traditional, and emerging hybrid challenges in the Indian Ocean Region. He also called on President Ranil Wickremesinghe and Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena, and met other senior Sri Lankan officials and [political leaders](#).

During a book launch in New Delhi on August 30 while commenting on India's relation with neighbouring countries, the External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar said that the relation with the [Maldives](#) has seen ups and downs, but the island nation recognizes India as a steady ally. Regarding India's [ties with Pakistan](#), he said that the "era of uninterrupted dialogue" was over. He asserted that India was "not passive" and would react "whether events take a positive or negative direction". On the developments in [Bangladesh](#), Dr Jaishankar stressed India has to find a ground of mutual interest that would deal with 'the government of the day'.

Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada has ordered Afghan officials to [enact a new morality law](#) curtailing women's rights and enshrining an austere vision of Islamic society. Earlier on August 21, the Taliban government announced the [ratification of the Law](#) on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice imposing severe restrictions on women. Meanwhile, a UN spokesman said the [United Nations](#) will continue to engage all stakeholders in Afghanistan, even though the Taliban issued a ban on women's voices and bare faces in public and severed ties with the UN mission after it criticized them.

### Other Developments

[6 Killed, 13 wounded in suicide bombing in Afghanistan's Kabul](#)

[Iran deploys AI and Surveillance to secure border with Afghanistan](#)

[Bangladesh revokes ban on Jamaat-E-Islami Bangladesh, its students wing Islami Chhatra Shibir](#)

## Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

Vietnamese Defence Minister [Phan Van Giang held talks with his Philippines counterpart](#) Gilberto Teodoro in Manila on August 30, 2024, marking his first visit to the Philippines in his present appointment. The two ministers signed Letters of Intent (LOIs) on the enhancement of cooperation in the field of HADR at Sea and Military Medicine and agreed to sign a deal to enhance defence cooperation between the Philippines and Vietnam by the end of the year. "The two sides shared the importance of maintaining peace, stability, safety and freedom of navigation and aviation in the East Sea, also known as the West Philippine Sea or the South China Sea," [according to the Philippines Defence Department](#). During his visit, he also paid a courtesy call on Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

New Zealand Prime Minister [Chris Luxon made an official visit to Malaysia](#) from September 1 to 3, 2024. During his visit, he held a meeting with the Prime Minister of Malaysia Anwar Ibrahim. The leaders announced an intent to increase the value of two-way trade by 50 per cent over the next six years and work towards the review of the Malaysia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement. The two countries aim to enhance cooperation in areas of education, connections through youth and sport, and disaster management.

On August 31, the Coast Guard of China alleged that a Philippine ship, "illegally stranded" at the Sabina Shoal, lifted anchor and ["deliberately rammed" a Chinese vessel](#). The [Philippine Coast Guard](#) rejected the accusation and instead claimed that a Chinese vessel "intentionally rammed with the BRP Teresa Magbanua three times, despite no provocation". The spokesperson for China's Coast Guard, Mr Liu Dejun, stated that "the Chinese Coast Guard will take the measures required to resolutely thwart all acts of provocation, nuisance and infringement and resolutely safeguard the country's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests".

### Other Developments

[Myanmar junta announces census for promised 2025 election](#)

[Pope Francis' gruelling tour gets into full swing in Indonesia](#)

[Thai PM finalises Cabinet, expects to seek royal approval this week](#)

## East Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [August 29](#), President Xi Jinping met with Assistant to the US President for National Security Affairs, Jake Sullivan, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. President Xi stated that China's US policy is highly consistent and that the two countries must develop the right strategic perception, and find a good answer to the overarching question: Are China and the US rivals or partners? [According to Chinese state media](#), Xi told Sullivan that he hoped the US could see China's development in a positive light and would work with [China](#) "to find a right way for two major countries to get along with each other". A White House readout said Sullivan and Xi also discussed Russia's war against Ukraine, the South China Sea, and further implementation of bilateral commitments on counternarcotics, military-to-military communications and AI safety and risk.

The Prime Minister of New Zealand, [Christopher Luxon, held a bilateral meeting President of the Republic of Korea](#), Yoon Suk Yeol in Seoul on September 4, 2024. The leaders agreed to enhance cooperation in areas of defence and security, trade, people-to-people and multilateral areas. The two countries are currently discussing elevating their relations to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and exploring the possibility of an upgrade to a bilateral Free Trade Agreement.

On August 31, [Japan lodged a protest with China](#) alleging that Chinese naval survey vessels entered Japanese waters. This is the second territorial incursion by the Chinese military into Japanese territory in a week following the first airspace intrusion by a Chinese military plane on Aug 26. In its official statement, the Foreign Ministry of Japan registered its "strong concern and protest over this incident" with a Chinese Embassy official.

### Other Developments

[China Resumes Taiwan Pomelo Imports, Allows Tourist Travel To Kinmen](#)

[China, South Africa Elevate Ties To All-Round Strategic Cooperative Partnership](#)

[Kim Jong Un Executes 30 Officials For Failing To Prevent Deaths During Floods: Report](#)

## West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On September 1, Israel Defence Forces (IDF) recovered the bodies of six [hostages killed by the terrorist group Hamas](#) in southern Gaza's Rafah. Following this, protests erupted across Israel, demanding that the country's leadership ensure the [immediate release of hostages](#). Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu informed that the [IDF will not withdraw](#) from the Philadelphi Corridor (Gaza-Egypt border) in exchange for a hostage deal as it would enable Hamas to regain strength. President Biden [condemned Hamas terrorists for killing Israeli civilians](#) including a US citizen, warning they will pay for their actions.

On September 3, a spokesman for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AK Party) expressed [Türkiye's interest in joining the BRICS group](#) of emerging market economies. He informed that Ankara was in the process of taking steps toward joining BRICS, however, no concrete action has been taken yet.

While the conflict in Ukraine continues, European officials expect [Iran to deliver ballistic missiles to Russia](#) soon, further deepening strategic relations between the two countries. Meanwhile, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Grossi expressed concerns over Iran's continued [accumulation of highly enriched Uranium](#) and called for increased transparency and cooperation from Tehran. Mr. Grossi also discussed Saudi Arabia's nuclear ambitions, stressing that the IAEA would ensure that any future developments in Riyadh's nuclear program would conform to international safeguards and non-proliferation standards.

### Other Developments

[Sheikh Khaled attends opening of Indian Institute of Technology Delhi Abu Dhabi](#)

[There is a lot to gain if EU and GCC work together more closely, European Council President Charles Michel tells Arab News](#)

[UK suspends 30 of its 350 arms export licences to Israel](#)

## Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [September 2](#), Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev announced during the annual state-of-the-nation address that Kazakhstan's referendum on constructing a nuclear power plant is [scheduled for October 6, 2024](#). President Tokayev strongly supports the construction of the nuclear power plant despite Kazakhstan's deep nuclear scars. He emphasised that the upcoming referendum would represent a broad national dialogue and exemplify the "[listening state](#)" concept. [In his speech](#), Tokayev said, "Given the growing global energy deficit, we are in dire need of reliable and environmentally friendly energy sources."

During a meeting with Turkmenistan's national leader, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei underscored the [importance of strengthening relations with Turkmenistan](#), emphasising that it is a top priority for Tehran, on August 28. In the meeting between Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and the Turkmen National Leader Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, [several strategic agreements were signed](#) aimed at expanding cooperation at all levels. Berdimuhamedow also highlighted critical topics discussed during the talks, including "gas, energy, electricity, roads, and transportation." He expressed optimism that the outcomes will be "positive for the implementation of these plans."

The Kazakh Foreign Ministry [summoned](#) the Belarusian ambassador to explain Belarus' dictator, Aleksandr Lukashenko's criticism towards Kazakhstan on August 21. Belarus' dictator, [Aleksandr Lukashenko, recently called out Kazakhstan](#) for not being sufficiently supportive of Russia's efforts to bludgeon Ukraine into submission militarily. He stated that Kazakhstan was insufficiently grateful for the political support that Moscow has provided in the past and may provide in the future, hinting that Russian forces have previously helped in quelling the upheaval in early 2022 in Kazakhstan, commonly referred to as the [January events](#). Kazakh officials did not take such criticism kindly. During the meeting in Astana, Foreign Minister Murat Nurtleu reminded the Belarusian ambassador, Pavel Utyupin, that Kazakhstan pursues "a peaceful foreign policy based on the principles of the UN and international law".



## Other Developments

[Russia-China Gas Deal Appears To Hit The Skids](#)

[Armenia proposes renewed peace treaty to Azerbaijan](#)

[Turkmenistan, Taliban Seal Agreements For Energy And Transport Projects](#)

[President Aliyev's Ruling Party Wins Azerbaijan Snap Election, Exit Polls Say](#)

[Asia-Pacific Central Securities Depositories from 40 countries to meet in Kazakhstan](#)

## Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

On September 2, 2024, the Iranian-backed Houthis [attacked two crude oil tankers](#) in the Red Sea: the Panama-flagged MV Blue Lagoon I, operated by a Greek company, and the Saudi-flagged MV Amjad. Both vessels were laden with crude oil, with the MV Amjad carrying approximately two million barrels, nearly double the amount on the MV Delta Sounion, which had been attacked on August 21. The assaults involved two ballistic missiles and a drone, with the MV Blue Lagoon I sustaining minimal damage and no injuries reported among the crew. These attacks raise significant environmental concerns, especially given the ongoing salvage operations for the MV Delta Sounion, which is [still ablaze](#) and poses a risk of a major oil spill.

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is currently witnessing increased activity from Chinese [research vessels](#), with three notable ships—Xiang Yang Hong 03, Zhong Shan Da Xue, and Ying Wang 7—being tracked by the Indian Navy. These vessels are reportedly engaged in various oceanographic surveys, which, while presented as scientific endeavours, are viewed with scepticism by India and other nations due to potential military implications. This activity coincides with India's missile tests and reflects broader geopolitical tensions, especially as Sri Lanka has [amended](#) its policies to allow Chinese vessels to dock, complicating the security dynamics in the region.

On August 30, 2024, the member states of the [Colombo Security Conclave \(CSC\)](#) signed the Charter and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the establishment of the CSC Secretariat during a ceremony hosted by the Government of Sri Lanka in Colombo. The Maldives has [officially joined](#) the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC), while Bangladesh has opted to stay away from the recent discussions. The Maldives' participation indicates a commitment to closer cooperation with India, particularly in maritime security and counter-terrorism efforts. Meanwhile, Bangladesh's absence from the NSA-level meeting, raises questions about its future involvement in the conclave.

The [22<sup>nd</sup> edition of Exercise Varuna](#) is taking place from September 2 to 4, 2024, in the Mediterranean Sea. The Indian Navy's P-8I aircraft has made a significant milestone by landing at Air Base 125 Istres-Le Tubé in France, marking its [first-ever](#) deployment in Europe. A significant event since the last Indian naval aircraft, the Alizé, operated from French soil 1961. Participating

unit also include the Indian Navy's Talwar-class frigate, INS Tabar. Initiated in 1993, the exercise was [officially](#) named Exercise Varuna in 2001.

### Other Developments

[INS Shivalik, completed three-day goodwill visit to Surabaya, Indonesia from August 30- September 1](#)

[INS Mumbai visited Colombo, SriLanka as a part of operational deployment](#)

[3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Joint Defence Cooperation Committee \(JDCC\) meeting between India and Kenya was held in New Delhi on September 3, 2024](#)



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