

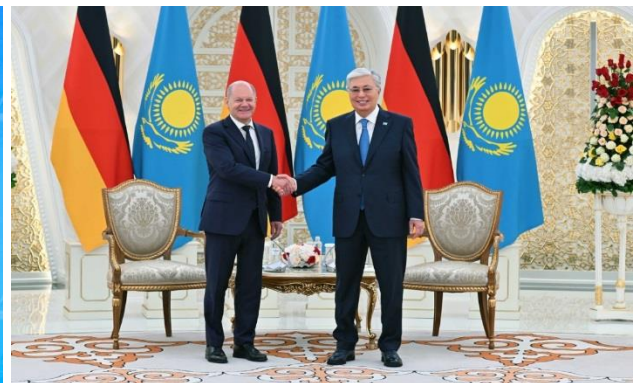


Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives September 18, 2024



Volume II, Issue 38 | September 18, 2024

Delhi Policy Group

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

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: Bangladesh Interim Government Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus held a meeting with U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Finance and Development Brent Neiman and Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asia Donald Lu in Dhaka on September 15, 2024. Source: [X/@ChiefAdviserGoB](https://twitter.com/ChiefAdviserGoB)

Southeast Asia: Philippine Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Theresa P. Lazaro met Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Chen Xiaodong in Beijing on September 11, 2024. Source: [Department of Foreign Affairs – Republic of the Philippines](https://www.dfa.gov.ph/department-of-foreign-affairs-republic-of-the-philippines)

East Asia: Chinese Defence Minister Dong Jun attended the opening ceremony of the 11th Beijing Xiangshan Forum on September 13, 2024. Source: [Official X Handle/Beijing Xiangshan Forum](https://www.mof.gov.cn/official-x-handle/beijing-xiangshan-forum)

Central Asia: President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Federal Chancellor of Germany Olaf Scholz held summit talks in Astana, on September 16, 2024. Source: [Official Website of President of Kazakhstan](https://www.kazakhstan.kz/official-website-of-president-of-kazakhstan)

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

The threat of financial default is looming on the Maldives as the [selloff of international Islamic bonds](#) has intensified in recent weeks. According to reports, the Indian government has offered the Maldives [emergency financial support](#) to help ease the situation. The Maldives can immediately tap USD 400 million available under the Reserve Bank of India's currency swap program that is open to regional countries. The country can also seek long-term loans under a USD 800 million line of credit extended to the government in 2019. Against this backdrop, Maldives President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu is expected to [visit India soon](#). Meanwhile, during a visit to Sri Lanka on September 13, Maldivian Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer acknowledged that the Maldives-India ties witnessed rough patches in the initial days of President Mohammad Muizzu-led government but insisted that the [two countries have resolved](#) the "misunderstandings".

However, Sukuk bonds saw a sharp rebound in the international market on September 13 as the People's Bank of China (PBOC) and the Maldivian Ministry of Economic Development and Trade [announced an MoU](#). The details of the MoU were not released but according to the press release, it is aimed at "promoting the settlement of current account transactions and direct investments in local currencies," as well as facilitating smoother trade. Maldivian Defence Minister Ghassan Maumoon met his Chinese counterpart Admiral Dong Jun on the sidelines of the 11th Beijing Xiangshan Forum and discussed avenues for strengthening [defence cooperation](#) between the two countries.

The new interim government of Bangladesh is reaching out to international lenders to overcome financial stress. On September 17, after a meeting with the [German Ambassador](#) to Bangladesh Achim Tröster, environment, forest and climate change adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan announced that Germany would provide Bangladesh with €1 billion over the next ten years, including €15 million this year, focusing on renewable energy generation. The World Bank Country Director Abdoulaye Seck after meeting Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus on September 17, said that the World Bank is committed to increasing lending to Bangladesh in this fiscal year to help the reform agenda of the Interim Government. Seck informed that the World Bank can mobilise about [USD 2 billion](#) in new financing in this fiscal year to support critical reforms, flood response, better air quality and health. Earlier, WB officials held

a meeting with Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur in which they proposed lending [USD 1 billion](#) under the condition that it should be used for reforming the country's banking and financial sectors and strengthening the central bank.

A senior delegation of the [Asian Development Bank](#), led by its South Asia director general Takeo Konishi, also called on Professor Yunus on September 15. Further, Bangladesh on September 15 sought assistance from the United States to implement the reform-related agenda of the interim government during the meeting between Prof. Yunus and the delegation led by [U.S. Assistant Secretary](#) of the Treasury for International Finance and Development Brent Neiman and Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asia Donald Lu. Meanwhile, USAID announced a grant of USD 202.25 million to Bangladesh.

Other Developments

[WHO: 2.9 million children in Afghanistan suffering from malnutrition](#)

[Turkmenistan and Afghanistan resume work on TAPI Gas Pipeline project](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Anshita Shukla

The latest [China-Philippines Bilateral Consultation Mechanism on the South China Sea \(BCM\)](#) was convened in Beijing on September 11, 2024. The meeting was co-chaired by the Vice Foreign Minister of China, Chen Xiaodong, and the Undersecretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, Maria Theresa P. Lazaro. The two sides agreed to continue discussions in areas of cooperation, especially on hotline mechanisms, coast guard cooperation, and marine scientific and technological cooperation. The official statement described the meeting as a “frank and candid exchange of views”.

The Government of India launched [Operation Sadbhav](#), in the wake of the floods caused by Typhoon Yagi, to provide emergency humanitarian assistance. India was one of the first responder nations, sending a tranche of 21 tons of relief material within hours of receipt of the request from the Myanmar side. On September 15, the country dispatched a consignment of 35 tons of humanitarian [assistance to Vietnam](#). This was followed by ten tonnes of humanitarian relief supplies sent [to Lao PDR](#). The second tranche of 32 tonnes of aid was dispatched to Myanmar on September 17, 2024.

On September 17, [two German naval ships made a port call in Manila](#) as part of their Indo-Pacific Deployment 2024, the first in 20 years. The FGS Baden-Württemberg and FGS Frankfurt am Main, will be docked at Pier 15 of the Manila South Harbor from September 16 to 19. The German Ambassador to the Philippines, Andreas Pfaffernoschke, stated that “this visit is not only a testament to the enhanced defense cooperation between Germany and the Philippines but also underscores how politically significant the Indo-Pacific region has become for Germany”.

Other Developments

[Myanmar military intensifies civilian killings and arrests, U.N. report says](#)

[Philippines sends replacement ship to Sabina Shoal, vows continued presence](#)

East Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

The [11th Beijing Xiangshan Forum](#), China's top security and defence forum commenced on September 12. It centred on key themes such as the Global Security Initiative, the Global South, security in the Asia-Pacific and China-US relations, all under the overarching theme of "Promoting Peace for a Shared Future". In his opening address at the Forum on September 13, [China's Defence Minister Dong Jun](#) emphasised that China and other major countries have a responsibility to safeguard security and urged for more equitable global governance. Without blaming any specific country, he called on leading powers to refrain from "bullying" weaker nations and encouraged regional countries to take charge of their own security. This contrasts with last year's forum, during which top Chinese general Zhang Youxia indirectly criticised the US for "stirring up trouble around the world". In his speech, Dong pledged to promote healthy military relations "across the board".

Warships of Russia's Pacific Fleet and the Chinese Navy practiced [missile and artillery firing in the Sea of Japan](#) as part of the Ocean-2024 drills, on September 16. Russia's RIA state news agency reported that more than 15 warships on the Russian side participated in the exercises, including the Pacific Fleet flagship, the missile cruiser Varyag. Based on the ramped joint drills between the two countries, [experts question](#) whether the two nuclear-armed powers, which are not treaty allies, could act together in any potential future conflict.

On [September 14](#), North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met with top Russian security official Sergei Shoigu and discussed deepening strategic dialogue between the two countries. According to state media KCNA, "They had a wide exchange of views on regional and international situations and reached a satisfactory consensus on issues including more cooperation to defend mutual safety interests". It was also reported that Kim affirmed that "the DPRK government would further expand cooperation and collaboration with Russia based on the treaty they signed in June". [Russia's security council](#) also said Shoigu's meeting with Kim will "make an important contribution to the implementation" of the defence pact.

Other Developments

[Maldives, China Hold Talks to Boost Military Ties](#)

[Japan Says Scrambled Jets after Russia Aircraft Cirled Country](#)

[LDP Presidential Hopefuls Lay Out Priorities for PM In Online Debate](#)

[China To 'Crush' Foreign Encroachment In South China Sea, PLA Official Says](#)

[PLA Slams Germany For Sailing Ships Through Taiwan Strait, Citing 'Security Risks'](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On September 17, Hezbollah members' [pagers exploded in Lebanon](#), resulting in at least nine fatalities and around 3000 injuries. Hezbollah held Israel responsible for the coordinated detonation of pagers and vowed retaliation. According to reports, [Israel had tampered with Taiwan-made pagers](#) imported into Lebanon to hide explosives. Meanwhile, Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi militants [fired a missile deep into Israel](#) with no injuries reported. The Houthis warned Israel to expect more such attacks as the first anniversary of the October 7 terrorist attack approaches. Israel Defence Forces [refuted Houthi claims that the projectile](#) used to attack Israel was a "hypersonic ballistic missile".

Amidst the continuing tensions in West Asia, US President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer met in Washington on September 13. Both leaders pledged to [strengthen bilateral military cooperation](#) to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. They expressed concerns that Russia may have shared nuclear secrets with Iran in return for Tehran providing Moscow with ballistic missiles. On the other hand, the Secretary of Russia's Security Council, Sergei Shoigu, met Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian in Tehran on September 17. The two countries pledged to [deepen their strategic partnership](#) to reduce the impact of Western sanctions.

Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader, stressed the importance of Global Islamic Unity and urged Muslims not to ignore the [suffering of Muslims in Myanmar, Gaza, and India](#). India rejected Khamenei's comments as ["misinformed and unacceptable"](#) and advised Iran to examine its own record before making observations about others.

Other Developments

[Chinese Premier Li Qiang cements ties with Saudi Arabia, UAE, including on new energy](#)

[Netanyahu warns Yemen's Houthis face a 'heavy price' as missile lands in central Israel](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev [hosted](#) the German Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz during his official visit to Kazakhstan on September 16. A welcome ceremony was held for Chancellor Scholz at the Akorda residence, followed by a summit between the two heads of state. President Tokayev emphasized the significance of Germany as one of Kazakhstan's primary trading partners and a leading investor in its economy. [Chancellor Scholz expressed his commitment](#) to enhancing economic relations, increasing direct investments, and boosting trade volumes. Both leaders underscored the importance of multifaceted cooperation, particularly in the areas of energy, "green" transformation, mining, transport and logistics, climate protection, ecology, and agriculture, aiming to enhance mutually beneficial trade and economic collaboration between the two nations.

On September 17, the [second summit of the Central Asian states and Germany](#) was held in Astana under the aegis of President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. The leaders reviewed cooperation between Germany and the Central Asian states, emphasising bilateral and multilateral collaboration within the framework of the European Union (EU). They reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen the partnership based on shared values and interests and continue the high-level dialogue. They also emphasised the importance of the Strategic Regional Partnership and adopted a [joint statement](#) after the meeting.

[Armenia has reportedly approached India to explore the procurement of Indian missiles](#), such as the indigenous beyond visual range Astra air-to-air missile, and to potentially upgrade its Russian-origin Sukhoi 30 (Su-30) combat aircraft fleet. Citing defence establishment sources, a report published by The Print on September 14 said that while discussions between New Delhi and Yerevan on these matters are ongoing, they are still in the early stages. The report also added that while it was not yet confirmed whether Armenia was also considering acquiring air-launched BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles from India, there are some indications that there may have been some initial interest expressed by Yerevan.

Other Developments

['Russia Cannot Be Defeated,' Kazakh President Tokayev Says](#)

[Turkish Ministers, Intel Chief To Attend Summit In Uzbekistan As Ties Deepen](#)

[Kazakhstan, Germany Sign 36 Documents Worth \\$6.3 Billion at Business Forum in Astana](#)

[Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry Sends A Note To Russia Over The Forced Deployment Of Azerbaijanis To War](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

The Greek-registered oil tanker [MV Sounion](#), which was attacked by Yemen's Houthis on August 21 while transiting the Red Sea, has been successfully towed to a safe area without any reported oil spill. The vessel was carrying approximately 1 million barrels of crude oil when it was set [ablaze](#). The operation was conducted under the protection of the EU's naval mission, Operation ASPIDES.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy have successfully conducted [back-to-back flight tests](#) of the Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VLSRSAM) on September 12 and 13, 2024. Both tests were carried out from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur, Odisha, and involved intercepting high-speed aerial targets simulating sea-skimming threats. The [first test](#) successfully engaged a low-altitude target. While the second test demonstrated the missile's capability to intercept a high-speed aerial target flying at a very low altitude.

Indian Navy's Eastern Naval Command rapidly deployed [INS Satpura](#) to provide immediate humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) to the flood-affected areas of Myanmar due to the Typhoon Yagi. Eastern Naval Command in coordination with Eastern Fleet and INHS Kalyani have successfully completed the loading of HADR pallets onto Indian naval ships destined from Visakhapatnam for Yangon.

Other Developments

[The Indian Navy's Dornier 228 aircraft demonstrated its maritime capabilities at the Selangor Aviation Show 2024 in Malaysia from September 12 to 14, 2024](#)

[Adani Ports & SEZ signed a concession agreement with Deendayal Port Authority \(DPA\) to Develop Multipurpose Berth at Kandla Port](#)

[Maldives and Japan sign the exchange of notes for the project for disaster resilience enhancement in Malé Island](#)

[The Indian Defence Ministry has approved a plan for the Navy, allocating ₹2,500 crore for the development of unmanned underwater vessels.](#)



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