



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

INDIA'S PROXIMITY ARCHIVES

December 10, 2025

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South Asia:

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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, Jayantika Rao T.V, Divya Rai and Arshiya Chaturvedi, Research Associates. Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Sanket Joshi at sanket@dpg.org.in.

Cover Images:

South Asia: India and Russia exchanged MOUs during President Putin's visit to India on December 5, 2025.

Source: [Flickr MEA](#)

West Asia: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met German Chancellor Friedrich Merz in Jerusalem on December 7, 2025. Source: [Official X Handle/Benjamin Netanyahu](#)

Central Asia: President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev met with President of the European Council António Costa at the Akorda residence, marking his first official visit to Kazakhstan, on December 4, 2025. Source: [President of Kazakhstan](#)

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Russian [President Vladimir Putin](#) paid a state visit to India on December 4-5. Prime Minister Modi and President Putin convened the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit to deliberate on bilateral matters and issues concerning regional and global developments. Sixteen MOUs were signed by the two countries, covering mobility and migration, health and food safety, maritime cooperation and polar waters, trade, and academic collaboration. The joint statement addresses collaborations in energy, connectivity, Arctic cooperation, civil nuclear endeavours, space exploration, counter-terrorism efforts, and engagement within UN and other multilateral platforms. In [the press statement](#) alongside President Putin, Prime Minister Modi prioritized the enhancement of connectivity between the two countries, adding that both parties are actively working towards an early conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union.

A lack of connectivity has restricted India's engagement with its resource-rich Eurasian neighbours. As rising powers, both Russia and India are endeavouring to revamp networks utilising multimodal approaches to establish routine trade, interaction, and collaboration between the two regions. The enhancement of India-Russia relations also highlighted India's perspective on strategic autonomy to pursue its national interests, irrespective of external influence.

Field Marshal Asim Munir, the head of the Pakistan Army, was designated as the country's first [Chief of Defence Forces](#) (CDF) on December 4th, with the appointment extending over a five-year period. This new arrangement integrates operational, administrative, and strategic powers within a singular office, established through revisions to Article 243 of the Constitution under the 27th Amendment. The lack of a notification on November 29, the date of the Field Marshal's initial three-year term's conclusion as army chief (preceding last year's amendment), increased speculation about the government's potential delay of the appointment to discuss upcoming postings other senior military officials.

The concentration of authority under the army chief, coupled with the conferral of permanent immunity to the rank of field marshal, has demonstrably shifted the political balance in favor of the military in Pakistan. The reorganization of the military command structure, coupled with adjustments to the judicial framework as stipulated in the recently ratified constitutional amendment 27, will have broad ramifications for Pakistan's governance model in the longer term.

Other Developments

[Saudi Arabia rolls over \\$3bn loan for another year for Pakistan](#)

[IMF approves another \\$1.2bn tranche for Pakistan](#)

[Pakistan Keeps Borders with Afghanistan Closed Until Security Guarantees Provided](#)

[Bangladesh signs agreement to purchase fighter jets from Italy](#)

[Nepal charges Chinese contractor with corruption over airport deal](#)

[Australia hits Taliban officials with sanctions](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

The Kuala Lumpur Peace Accord reached between Thailand and Cambodia was [shattered](#) after military clashes erupted along the neighbours' disputed border on December 7. On [December 8](#), it was reported that Thai F-16 fighter jets bombed Cambodian targets – including a casino near the border that Thailand accuses Cambodia of using it as a base for drones. Officials in Thailand and Cambodia each accused the other side of firing first, just as they had in July. As the third day of fighting continues, at least eight people have been killed, with the fighting spreading to more points along the disputed border, with accusations of rocket strikes and drone attacks in some areas. Thailand's Prime Minister, Anutin Charnvirakul, told reporters that talks were futile because of Cambodia's actions and that "Cambodia must comply to our conditions in order to stop the fight." General Chaipruak Doungprapat, the Thai Army chief of staff, said his goal was to "render Cambodia incapable of military action for a long time."

This renewed round of Thai-Cambodian hostilities, marked by full-scale exchanges of heavy weaponry across the frontier – underscores the inherent fragility of peace accords concluded hastily without addressing the root causes of dispute. The rapid escalation highlights how unresolved territorial tensions can swiftly unravel formal agreements. Notably, the rhetoric from Thai leadership in this phase signals a decisive tilt toward military dominance over dialogue, further narrowing the prospects for negotiated settlement.

On [December 9](#), US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said he believes that Jakarta is "backtracking" on several commitments it made, leaving Indonesia's trade deal with the United States in danger of collapsing. US officials believe Jakarta is reneging on agreements to eliminate non-tariff barriers on American industrial and agricultural exports as well as digital trade issues. Greer is [scheduled to speak](#) to Airlangga Hartarto, the Indonesian coordinating minister for economic affairs this week in an effort to convince Jakarta to resolve their differences on the deal.

The deal is encountering significant hurdles, as Prabowo Subianto's unilateral negotiations in July – conducted without consultation with his cabinet – have left Jakarta resisting the coercive clauses, arguing that they infringe upon its economic sovereignty. The deal was signed under pressure of high tariffs and celebrated as a short-term win, but its lack of domestic consensus in Indonesia have left it politically unsustainable.

Other Developments

[Deadly storms sweep South and Southeast Asia, leaving over 1,600 dead](#)

[Suspected drone battery explosion kills 22 in Indonesia's capital](#)

[Philippines' Marcos to Bump Up Military Pay After Coup Calls](#)

East Asia

by

Arshiya Chaturvedi

China, on December 8, issued an [official response](#) to the US National Security Strategy released on December 4, declaring America's security priority on Taiwan. [The US Strategy document](#) spells out the US's objective to deter conflict over Taiwan through enhanced military buildup and consolidated military superiority in coordination with its allies. A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson in a press conference remarked that Taiwan is the first red line in China-U.S. relations, and the US should exercise caution in supporting 'Taiwan independence' separatist forces. He further noted that China is willing to work with the US to promote stability in the region, but will not tolerate any external interference in its sovereign affairs, including Taiwan's independence. The Taiwanese side has greatly appreciated this recently announced US stance on Taiwan and reaffirmed its strong commitment to strengthening its self-defence capabilities.

China has been making heavy deployments of its naval and coast guard vessels in the East Asian Region. Japan, too, is installing its medium-range surface-to-air missile [defence system](#) on Yonaguni, an island near Taiwan.

Amidst China's continuous military assertiveness, the US's strategic prioritisation, defensive moves by Taiwan and other regional actors like Japan, the East Asia Region, and particularly the Taiwan Strait, is witnessing one of the most volatile phases in its history.

On December 9, seven Russian and two Chinese military aircraft entered the Korea Air [Defence Identification Zone](#) (KADIZ), off South Korea's east and south coast. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) notified that while there was no infringement of the country's territorial airspace, South Korean fighter jets were deployed to manage potential contingencies. As per the new reports, the Russian and Chinese planes were there in the KADIZ for an hour. It is being suggested that this was part of a joint exercise which Chinese and Russian forces are known to conduct around the Korean Peninsula once or twice a year.

Although KADIZ is a buffer zone and not a sovereign airspace of South Korea, any incursions are sensitive because of strategic signalling, such as a show of strength or challenging national or regional defence capabilities. With East Asia already in the midst of strategic volatility, South Korea needs to deliberate on its defence readiness and strategic diplomacy approach.

Other Development

[North Korea's omission: Trump's new National Security Strategy paper compels Seoul to adjust its strategy as well](#)

[President Xi Jinping and French President Emmanuel Macron Jointly Meet the Press](#)

[Russian bombers join Chinese air patrol near Japan as Tokyo-Beijing tie strains](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On December 7, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met German [Chancellor Friedrich Merz in Jerusalem](#), where both leaders reaffirmed their special partnership. PM Netanyahu informed that the first phase of the Gaza [ceasefire was nearly complete](#) and that he expects Israel to move on to phase two of the peace plan, which focuses on demilitarising Gaza and operationalising the UN-mandated International Stability Force. A "historic shift" in Israel-Germany relations was marked by Israel's handing over of the joint US-Israel developed ["Arrow-3" ballistic missile defence system](#) to the German Army.

Amidst the raging Russia-Ukraine conflict, German deployment of the Israeli-made "Arrow-3" system aims at addressing vulnerabilities in Europe's air defences against any potential Russian long-range missile attack.

As part of the US's National Defence Authorisation Act (NDAA), which was released on December 7, the United States Congress has called for the repeal of the '2019 Caesar Act', which would [give sanctions relief to Syria's](#) new government. In return for sanctions relief, the US requires the Syrian government to combat Islamic State (ISIS) militants, protect religious and ethnic minorities, including the Alawites, Druze, Kurds, and Christians, and refrain from provoking unilateral military action against neighbouring countries, including Israel. The decision follows a meeting between President Trump and Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa earlier in 2025, when Washington temporarily suspended some sanctions against Syria.

The US sanctions on Syria pose a significant barrier to the economic revival of the war-torn country, and sanctions relief would likely result in significant Saudi investments in the country.

Other Developments

[Inside Iran's largest naval exercise in years](#)

[US official to 'Post': International Stabilisation Force to be deployed at the beginning of 2026](#)

[Turkey, US will find way of removing CAATSA sanctions 'very soon', Turkish FM says](#)

[India, France & UAE to kick off air drill today](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [December 4](#), Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and European Council President António Costa issued a joint statement following constructive talks on advancing Kazakhstan–EU cooperation ahead of the 10th anniversary of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Tokayev emphasised that economic collaboration was central to the discussions, highlighting commitments to diversify trade and investment, foster a stable climate for European businesses, and pursue joint initiatives in energy efficiency, critical minerals, digital technologies, and transport connectivity – particularly through the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route. He outlined Kazakhstan's ambition to integrate more deeply into European supply chains by promoting local processing, value-added production, and recycling. [Costa](#), for his part, stressed that the European Union and Kazakhstan share a common vision rooted in multilateralism and a rules-based international order anchored in the UN Charter. He affirmed that these principles underpin joint efforts to advance global security, stability, and prosperity.

This joint statement is a key geopolitical signal. Kazakhstan is leveraging its role as a transit hub and supplier of critical resources to deepen ties with Europe, while the EU is using aiming to anchor Central Asia within its vision of a rules-based order. The partnership reflects a subtle rebalancing of influence in the region, with Kazakhstan seeking autonomy and the EU expanding its strategic footprint.

On [December 6](#), Azerbaijani presidential adviser Hikmet Hajiyev and Armenian Security Council Secretary Armen Grigoryan met to talk about the ongoing peace process between their countries during a panel at the Doha Forum. The two officials spoke at a panel titled "Armenia-Azerbaijan Lasting Peace: The Washington Agreement and a Joint Future," held as part of the 23rd Doha Forum in Qatar's capital Doha. Speaking on the International Route for Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP), also known as the Zangezur Corridor, Grigoryan said the project could open new business opportunities for Armenia by channeling the movement of goods and services through its territory, lowering costs and drawing investment. He noted that early positive steps were already visible, including Azerbaijan's decision to lift its transit embargo on Armenian products and Armenia's readiness to provide transit for Azerbaijan.

The Doha Forum meeting reflects a cautious but notable thaw in Armenia–Azerbaijan relations, with economic pragmatism beginning to complement political dialogue.

Other Developments

[Azerbaijani, NATO officials discuss expanding military cooperation](#)

[Uzbekistan Inaugurates First Utility-Scale Solar and Battery Project with Masdar](#)

[Azerbaijan hails deepening ties with Iran in high-level Baku talks](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

Australia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Richard Marles, and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Penny Wong, [travelled](#) to Washington DC for AUSMIN on December 8, 2025. They met US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth to mark the 40th anniversary of these consultations, highlighting the alliance's role in Indo-Pacific security. During [the joint press conference](#), US Secretary of State Marco Rubio praised the US-Australia alliance as exceptionally strong, noting Australia's participation in every US war over recent decades and committing to further build the partnership. US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth highlighted enhancements to US force posture in Australia, including infrastructure upgrades at airbases in Queensland and the Northern Territory for bomber rotations, and in Darwin for Marine deployments and MV-22 Osprey prepositioning to create resilient logistics networks. Hegseth also emphasised deepening ties on the defence industrial base, covering guided weapons production, explosive ordnance, precision strike missiles, hypersonic cruise missiles, air-to-air missiles, and Mark 54 torpedoes, with goals for co-production and co-sustainment. The discussion also focused on the Australia, U.K. and U.S. trilateral security agreement known as AUKUS, which has been in place for just over three years.

The AUSMIN 2025, held just 4 days after the US released the National Security Strategy release, highlights alignment between US "America First" priorities and alliance strengthening. The discussions on infrastructure upgrades and co-production and co-sustainment exemplify the NSS priority of regional partnerships in the Indo-Pacific to counter threats without the sole US burden. It also translates NSS rhetoric of burden shifting, expecting allies and partners "to assume primary responsibility for their regions and contribute far more to the collective defence", into actions.

Papua New Guinea's Minister for Defence, Dr Billy Joseph; Australia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Richard Marles; and Indonesia's Minister of Defence, General (Ret.) Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin, met in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, for their [inaugural Trilateral Defence Ministers' Meeting](#). Ministers reflected on the signing of the PNG-Australia Mutual Defence Treaty (Pukpuk Treaty) and the substantive conclusion of negotiations on an Australia-Indonesia Treaty on Common Security, and their contribution to the peace, stability and security of our shared region. Ministers also welcomed this opportunity to discuss defence cooperation between the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, the Australian Defence Force, and the Indonesian National Armed Forces. They shared perspectives on regional defence and

security cooperation and noted the breadth of military engagement between three close neighbours.

This inaugural defence minister meeting builds on recent bilateral pacts, like Indonesia-Australia's 2024 Defense Cooperation Agreement and Indonesia-PNG's border security deal, as neighbours address US-China rivalry and rising defence spending without fully aligning strategically – Indonesia stays non-aligned, Australia leans Western, and PNG hosts US forces.

Other Developments

[U.S. Navy renews HawkEye 360 contract to advance Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness](#)

[Indian Navy, Brazilian Navy, and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders sign landmark tripartite MoU for exchange of information on maintenance of Scorpène-class submarines and other naval vessels](#)

[India Brunei's inaugural defence cooperation eye on expansion of military-to-military exchanges](#)

[Indian Coast Guard \(ICG\) Ship Sarthak arrived at Suwaikh Port in Kuwait as part of its Overseas Deployment \(OSD\) to the Gulf region](#)



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