



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

INDIA'S PROXIMITY ARCHIVES

December 31, 2025

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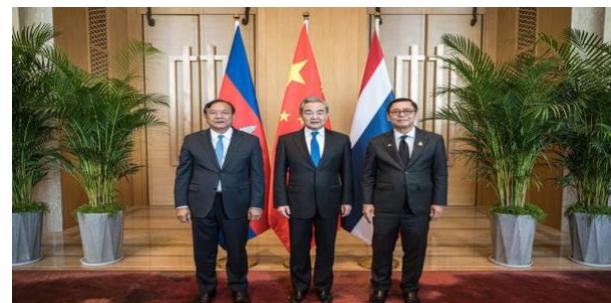
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ABOUT US

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: Tarique Rehman, Acting Chairman of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, returned to Dhaka after 17 years of political exile on December 25, 2025. Source: [Official X Handle/Bangladesh Nationalist Party](#)

East Asia: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn, and Thai Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow meet in Yunnan Province, China, on December 29 for peace talks. Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China](#)

West Asia: US President Donald Trump and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met in Florida on December 29, 2025. Source: [Official X Handle/Benjamin Netanyahu](#)

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Watch Points

◊ *Bangladesh after Khalida Zia*

◊ *Fragile peace in Southeast Asia*

◊ *Israel's formal recognition of Somaliland*

South Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On December 30, [Khaleda Zia, the former Prime Minister of Bangladesh](#) and the Chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), passed away in Dhaka. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended his condolences to the people of Bangladesh, noting that her vision and legacy will remain a [guiding force in shaping India-Bangladesh partnership](#). Meanwhile, Tarique Rahman, the son of Khaleda Zia and Acting Chairman of BNP, returned to Bangladesh after nearly 17 years in exile ahead of the parliamentary elections to be held on February 12, 2026. He vowed to unite people of all faiths to create a secure and inclusive Bangladesh.

The passing of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, coupled with the return of her son Tariq Rehman, may precipitate a major shift in the political landscape of Bangladesh. In light of the upcoming elections, these developments could bolster the BNP's standing, given their current lead in public opinion surveys.

Tajik President Emomali Rahmon inaugurated new border security facilities along [Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan](#), amidst growing concerns over cross-border attacks emanating from Taliban-led Afghanistan. These measures follow a cross-border incident where two Tajik border guards were killed in an attack originating from Afghan territory; earlier, five Chinese nationals were also killed near the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border.

Multiple attacks originating from Afghanistan on the Tajik border may prompt CSTO member states to accelerate the implementation of a security belt around Afghanistan.

On December 24, the Taliban's Health Minister, Noor Jalal Jalali, visited New Delhi, where [Afghanistan received USD 5 million in medical aid](#) from India, including vaccines, radiotherapy machines, and hospital construction support. Several hospitals have been unable to provide basic healthcare services since the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan in 2021, as international aid has significantly decreased.

The Taliban's recent visits to India have centred on commercial and humanitarian support. Due to the closed borders with Pakistan, Afghanistan is looking for alternative trade partners and routes.

Other Developments

[Bangladesh unrest: 'Some part' of Yunus-led government allowed attacks on newspapers: Editors' Council Chief](#)

["Finger pointing": India rejects Pakistan's claims on minority attacks, cites its "abysmal record"](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On December 28, the first phase of Myanmar's three-phase [elections](#) was held in various parts of the country. The first phase covered 102 townships; subsequent phases will be held on January 11, 2026 (100 townships) and January 25 (63 townships). On December 29, [Myanmar's main pro-military party has claimed an overwhelming lead](#). A senior official from the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) said that the party had won 82 of 102 seats in the lower house of the legislature in townships where counting had been completed, suggesting it secured more than 80 percent of the seats contested in the first phase. The official added that the party had also won all eight townships in the capital, Naypyidaw. Official figures have yet to be published by Myanmar's Union Election Commission.

The outcome underscores what observers anticipated – a carefully orchestrated process designed not to restore democracy, but to consolidate military authority under façade of popular mandate.

On [December 29](#), Thailand's army accused Cambodia of breaching the newly signed ceasefire deal reached on December 27, after weeks of deadly clashes. In an official statement, [the Royal Thai Army accused Cambodia of "provocative action"](#) by sending more than 250 drones across the border. When asked about the Thai Army's claims, Cambodian Defense Ministry spokesperson Maly Socheata said the government and army "reaffirm their firm, sincere, and honest commitment to fully and steadfastly respect" the previous ceasefire agreements reached with Thailand. In another statement by Cambodia, Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn described the drone incident as "a small issue related to flying drones seen by both sides along the border line. On December 29, he said on Cambodian state television that the two sides had discussed the issue and agreed to investigate and "resolve it immediately". However, Thailand has not confirmed this and in fact on December 30 announced that it is [delaying the transfer](#) of 18 captured Cambodian soldiers due to alleged breaches of a renewed truce agreement, as the ceasefire passed the 72-hour mark that was supposed to trigger their release. Nevertheless, on December 31, Thailand released 18 Cambodian soldiers.

The December 29–30 developments underscore the fragility of the Thai–Cambodian ceasefire. Thailand's accusations and Cambodia's conciliatory denials reveal a profound trust deficit between the two sides. Even with the intervention of a third country – China to broker peace –



after earlier efforts by ASEAN and the United States faltered – the outcome remains unchanged: the ceasefire continues to teeter on the brink of collapse.

Other Developments

[Thailand, Cambodia sign new ceasefire agreement to end border fighting](#)

[Philippines faces high-stakes balancing act as 2026 ASEAN chair](#)

East Asia

by

Arshiya Chaturvedi

China hosted a trilateral meeting of the foreign ministers of China, Cambodia, and Thailand on December 29, 2025, in Yuxi, Yunnan Province. The meeting, which was attended by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Prak Sokhonn and Thai Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow, along with senior military officials from the three countries, aimed at facilitating constructive dialogue to achieve peace and maintain the ceasefire between Cambodia and Thailand. The parties unanimously agreed that the ceasefire agreement must neither stagnate nor be derailed. An agreement was also reached by both sides for step by step implement the ceasefire arrangement through continuous communication and consultation, while also committing to rebuilding mutual trust. This is a part of China's ongoing shuttle diplomacy for the two Southeast Asian countries, which have witnessed rising hostilities since mid 2025. Under the same diplomatic effort, China's Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited Cambodia and Thailand from December 18 to 23, 2025.

China's proactive mediation efforts between Cambodia and Thailand highlight its calculated strategy of employing soft power and regional diplomacy to reinforce its influence and image as a responsible global power, thereby advancing its strategic interests in Southeast Asia.

China, on December 29, launched a large-scale military drill, named Justice Mission 2025, involving multiple forces of the Eastern Theatre Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), including Army, Navy, Air Force and Rocket Force troops. The said exercise has been suggested to be among the largest drills conducted near Taiwan in recent years. On day one, Live-fire exercises were conducted in five maritime and airspace zones around Taiwan, alongside air and naval patrols, simulated precision strikes, and anti-submarine manoeuvres. Many warplanes, navy ships, as well as China's militarised coast guard vessels and surveillance balloons have been detected in proximity to the Taiwan Island. The Chinese authorities have called it a legitimate and necessary action to safeguard China's sovereignty and national unity and a clear warning to "Taiwan Independence" separatist forces and external interference.

Responding to this, Taiwan has condemned the Chinese government and called it the biggest destroyer of peace. US President Donald Trump has expressed no serious concern over the possibility of an attack on the island, noting that China has been



conducting naval exercises in the area for the past 20 years. However, there are reports indicating that [the US has deployed two aircraft carriers and an amphibious assault ship to the Western Pacific on December 30.](#)

China's increased assertiveness near Taiwan sends a clear signal that it is willing and has the capacity to flex its military and political muscles to deter others from interfering. It is not merely reactive but part of a long-term strategy to consolidate control, challenge deterrence, and reinforce its claim over the island.

Other Developments

[South Korea greenlights operation of nuclear power reactor](#)

[South Korea's President Lee to visit China from January 4 to 7 as Seoul seeks to restore ties](#)

[North Korea's Kim Jong Un oversees cruise missile launches](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On December 26, Israel became the first nation to officially recognise the 'Republic of Somaliland' as an independent and sovereign state. Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu stated that the [recognition of Somaliland](#) is in accordance with the Abraham Accords, signed at the initiative of US President Donald Trump. 21 Arab, Islamic, and African countries including Somalia rejected the recognition of Somaliland by Israel as a [blatant violation of international law](#), warning that such measures would adversely affect peace and security in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea. The US [supported Israel's right to conduct diplomatic relations](#) as a sovereign state, while reminding that some members of the UN Security Council had unilaterally recognised a "non-existent Palestinian state", yet no emergency meeting was called.

Israel's recognition of Somaliland is aimed at countering the military threat posed by Yemen's Houthis, who have attacked Israeli vessels and disrupted shipping in the Red Sea.

US President Donald Trump and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a meeting at the Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida, on December 29, 2025. President Trump warned that "[there will be hell to pay for Hamas](#) if they refuse to disarm as agreed" as part of the Gaza peace plan. Moreover, Trump warned Iran not to rebuild its nuclear sites, otherwise the US and Israel would have to strike those sites again.

Israeli PM Netanyahu's meeting with President Trump continued the trend of deepening strategic ties between the two countries and demonstrated Washington's unwavering support for Israel's security.

Other Developments

[After Saudi Arabia's Yemen strike, UAE rejects support for separatists](#)

[Deadly protests and clashes in Syria – what happened and what's next?](#)

[Syrian ministers meet Putin to discuss defence, economic cooperation, SANA says](#)

[Three Iranian satellites launched from Russia, state media says](#)

[Iran's president reacts to Trump's threat, vows 'severe' response to 'oppressive' aggression](#)

Central Asia

by

Divya Rai

President Sadyr Japarov presented Kyrgyzstan's National Development Program through 2030 at the fourth People's Kurultai in Bishkek on December 25-26, 2025. Kyrgyzstan's fourth People's Kurultai, a [national forum for direct dialogue between citizens and state leadership](#), outlined the government's economic, social, and environmental priorities for the coming years. Japarov described the past three years as a period of strong economic performance, with average annual GDP growth of 9.8%. Real GDP grew by 10.2% in the first 11 months of 2025. GDP per capita in 2024 reached approximately \$2,513. Japarov presented the government's National Development Program through 2030, which is centred on four key pillars: industrialisation, transformation into a regional transport and logistics hub, agricultural and tourism development, and expansion of green energy. The industrialisation strategy includes the creation of industrial and technology zones and the construction of new production facilities to double industrial output by 2030. Large-scale investments in railways, highways, logistics centres, and warehouses are expected to bolster Kyrgyzstan's role as a regional transit corridor.

Kyrgyzstan's National Development Program through 2030 aims to transform the economy from raw material dependence to diversified, value-added growth amid regional geopolitical shifts. It positions Kyrgyzstan as a Central Asian transit hub, potentially enhancing trade connectivity between China, Europe, and South Asia.

On December 23, President Donald Trump said he would invite Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to attend the United States-[hosted 2026 G20 summit](#) in Miami. The announcement followed separate telephone calls with Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, which Trump described as focused on peace and expanded trade and cooperation. Official statements from Kazakhstan's presidential [office](#) said that President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev held a lengthy conversation with Trump that covered a range of issues, including the conflict in Ukraine. Tokayev described the situation as complex, noting that territorial concerns remain central and require realistic compromises. Beyond routine diplomatic communication, the exchanges carry broader geopolitical implications for Central Asia. Neither country is a member of the G20, but the host country of the annual leaders' gathering of major economies often invites non-members to attend the summit. The 2026 gathering is planned for Trump's golf club in Doral, Florida, near Miami.



The administration is giving greater attention to Central Asia, which holds deep reserves of minerals and produces roughly half the world's uranium, as it intensifies the hunt for rare earth metals needed for high-tech devices, including smartphones, electric vehicles and fighter jets.

Other Developments

[Tajikistan and China signed an MoU on cooperation in the development of informatisation](#)

[Uzbek and Russian Presidents exchange views on peace and partnership](#)

[Kazakh and Georgian FMs assess bilateral relations, trade ties](#)

[Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan push faster joint investment projects](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

The Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) *Kaundinya*, the Indian Navy's indigenously built traditional stitched sailing vessel, [commenced her maiden overseas voyage](#) from Porbandar, Gujarat, to Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. Constructed using traditional stitched shipbuilding techniques dating back centuries with natural materials, INSV *Kaundinya* draws inspiration from historical sources and iconographic evidence. She embodies India's rich legacy of indigenous shipbuilding, seamanship, and oceanic navigation. The voyage retraces ancient maritime routes linking India's western coast with Oman, which once facilitated trade, cultural exchange, and sustained civilisational interactions across the Indian Ocean.

INSV Kaundinya's reaffirms its commitment to maritime diplomacy, heritage preservation, and regional cooperation. The voyage testifies to India's civilisational maritime outlook and its role as a responsible, culturally rooted power in the Indian Ocean Region.

The US State Department [released](#) various targeted initiatives in the Indo-Pacific undertaken in the "America First Foreign Assistance in the Indo-Pacific", emphasising maritime security, disaster response, and infrastructure. The fact sheet mentioned delivering assistance to Indian Ocean nations, with Sri Lanka receiving technology for hydrographic mapping to enhance maritime safety and commercial shipping, post-disaster aid including clean water and emergency shelter after severe weather, and decommissioned US Coast Guard cutters to bolster surveillance and drug interdictions. It also stressed the United States, Australia, India, and Japan (the Quad) launched the Quad Ports of the Future Partnership to support quality port infrastructure development across the Indo-Pacific, in collaboration with regional partners. Malaysia similarly benefits from Coast Guard cutter transfers to strengthen maritime domain awareness and counter-narcotics efforts.

The fact sheet is only meant to counter narratives of reduced foreign assistance in the Indo-Pacific. Even if there has been a temporary funding lapse, the programme appears more likely than not to be sustained, especially given the strategic location of the Indian Ocean countries along critical sea lanes and the administration's incentive to maintain influence there amid China's growing footprint.

Other Developments

[Russia, China and Iran are expected to join Exercise Mosi-3 naval exercises off South Africa](#)

[BRICS Plus navies to stage joint maritime exercise in South African waters](#)

[The Indian Coast Guard inducted the first in-built pollution control vessel - SAMUDRA PRATAP](#)



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