



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



INDIA'S PROXIMITY ARCHIVES

April 22, 2026

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South Asia:

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Volume IV, Issue 16



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 an independently funded 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., and Divya Rai, Research Associates. Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Sanket Joshi at sanket@dpg.org.in.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Delhi Policy Group as an Institution

Cover Images:

1. India's Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan in a meeting with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disanayaka in Colombo, April 19, 2026. Source: [MEA](#)
2. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei informed that Tehran will not transfer enriched Uranium outside the country on April 18, 2026. Source: [X/@Iran_GOV](#)
3. Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev participated in panel session of Antalya Diplomacy Forum, on April 17, 2026. Source: [President of Kazakhstan](#)

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Vice President of India C.P. Radhakrishnan [visited Sri Lanka](#) from April 19-20 and met with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disanayaka. Discussions between the two leaders encompassed current bilateral programmes, with particular attention to India's development cooperation endeavours in Sri Lanka. The Vice President, during an address to the Indian Diaspora, declared that the eligibility criteria for OCI Cards would be expanded to encompass 5th and 6th generation Indian Origin Tamils residing in Sri Lanka. The Vice President also declared that the OCI process would be simplified. The two countries signed an MoU for the construction of a four-story Medical Ward Complex at the District General Hospital in Mullaitivu. They also agreed to implement priority projects under the Multi-Sectoral Grant Assistance for the Eastern Province

As a significant partner, Sri Lanka plays a crucial role in India's 'Neighbourhood First' Policy and Vision MAHASAGAR. India's Vice President's first visit to Sri Lanka, and his declaration of many people-focused projects, signals the enhancement of deep-rooted connections between the two countries.

On April 17, an agreement was reached between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to [extend a \\$3 billion deposit](#) from the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) and a three-year extension for its existing \$5bn facility. Pakistan's international reserves are [under strain](#) due to the UAE's decision not to extend its \$3.5 billion debt and the repayment of a \$1.4 billion Eurobond, all happening amidst global oil price fluctuations caused by the Middle East crisis. The purpose of the Saudi deposits is to assist Islamabad in meeting the IMF program's minimum reserve requirements, reduce speculation regarding the exchange rate's stability, and signal market continuity.

Pakistan's economy continues to grapple with balance of payment problems. The conflict in the Gulf has exacerbated existing pressures through elevated fuel costs and disruptions in supply chains.

Other Developments

[China presses Nepal to keep distance from Tibetan and Taiwanese activities](#)

[US Assistant Secretary Kapur calls on Foreign Minister Khanal, discusses trade and investment](#)

[Bangladesh raises fuel prices as conflict in West Asia drives up costs](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [April 17](#), Vietnam's General Secretary and newly appointed President To Lam concluded a four-day state visit to China, his first trip abroad after assuming office. The two sides pledged to strengthen ties in infrastructure, security, and trade. President Xi Jinping urged cooperation against unilateralism and protectionism, while highlighting collaboration in emerging fields like AI and semiconductors. The two leaders [affirmed](#) shared missions of national development and socialist modernisation, stressing Party leadership as the foundation of bilateral stability. China reaffirmed Vietnam's priority status in its neighbourhood diplomacy, while Vietnam emphasised China as a top foreign policy priority. The two sides also agreed to fully bring into play the special role of the Party-to-Party channel as a foundation for safeguarding the two Parties and the socialist regimes in their countries, while promoting the steady development of bilateral relations. The visit concluded with a Joint Statement to deepen the Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership and build a Vietnam–China community with a shared future at a higher level.

Vietnam's President Lam's state visit to China signals a deliberate tilt toward Beijing, reinforcing economic integration and political alignment while carefully managing maritime disputes. This move strengthens China's influence in Southeast Asia amid intensifying U.S.–China rivalry.

On [April 20](#), the United States and the Philippines launched *Balikatan*, one of their largest annual combat exercises, showcasing allied military strength in Asia despite Washington's ongoing focus on the war in West Asia. This year's drills are broader than before, with participation from Japan, France, and Canada—countries that have signed visiting forces agreements with Manila. For the first time, the Philippines [will display Indian-origin BrahMos missiles](#) during exercises simulating strikes on “enemy warships” at sea. China has strongly objected, warning that the U.S.-Philippine drills are “[playing with fire](#).” Running until May 8, the [exercises include](#) maritime strike drills on Itbayat Island, the northernmost point of the Philippines, just 155 km from Taiwan—whose democratic government China claims as its own. Counter-landing live-fire drills will also take place in Zambales province along the South China Sea, about 230 km from the contested Scarborough Shoal, which is under Chinese control. The day after the drills began, China hinted that its energy assistance to the Philippines could be linked to Manila's decision to host military exercises with the U.S. and other allies.

Balikatan 2026 represents a deliberate U.S.-Philippine effort to signal deterrence against Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait, while simultaneously expanding into a broader multilateral coalition with Japan, France, Canada, and others.

Other Developments

[Myanmar cuts ex-leader Aung San Suu Kyi's sentence](#)

[Japan looks to invite Philippine President Marcos as state guest in May](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On April 22, U.S. President Donald J. Trump announced that at the request of Pakistani mediators, he is [extending the ceasefire with Iran indefinitely](#), allowing time for further talks. Trump maintained that the U.S. military will continue to blockade Iranian ports and remain prepared to strike again if necessary. Due to contradictory messages, behaviour and unacceptable actions from the American side, [Iran refused to participate in the second round](#) of the Islamabad Talks. Tehran described Washington's [blockade of Iran's ports](#) as an "act of war" and insisted that talks between the U.S. and Iran would only take place if the blockade is lifted. Iran's Foreign Ministry also rejected President Trump's claim that Tehran had "agreed" to allow the [U.S. to take its highly enriched Uranium](#)

The stalling of the second round of U.S.-Iran dialogue in Islamabad suggests that the two sides have hardened their positions, and there is a heightened risk of renewed military conflict.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman held a phone conversation on April 20. In his remarks, President Xi reiterated the importance of keeping the Strait of Hormuz [open for navigation](#). He called for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire between the U.S. and Iran, and the need to resolve the conflicts in West Asia through political and diplomatic channels.

The U.S.-Iran conflict and its impact on the Strait of Hormuz remain a major concern for China, which imports a significant amount of energy through this strategic waterway.

Other Developments

[India summons Iran Ambassador](#)

[Brent crude prices remain near the \\$100 a barrel mark despite Iran ceasefire extension](#)

[Lebanese state not seeking confrontation with Hezbollah but won't be intimidated, PM says](#)

[Hegseth Says China Has Assured the U.S. It Isn't Sending Arms to Iran](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

At the [Antalya Diplomacy Forum](#) hosted by Türkiye's Ministry of Foreign Affairs from April 17-19 under the theme "Mapping Tomorrow, Managing Uncertainties", Kazakhstan's [President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev urged](#) global leaders to embrace greater responsibility, pragmatism, and renewed efforts to reform the United Nations. Speaking at a high-level panel, Tokayev stressed that leadership today must be defined by restraint and accountability, especially in matters of international peace and security. He warned that regional conflicts increasingly spill across borders, escalating into global crises. Tokayev also addressed tensions in the Middle East, particularly concerning Iran. He called for restraint and diplomacy, acknowledging the complexity of the issue. He emphasized Kazakhstan's solidarity with Persian Gulf states and urged all nations to exercise strategic restraint and halt military actions in the region. Tokayev underscored that nuclear issues must remain central to negotiations, highlighting their importance in maintaining global stability.

Although the forum produced no new regional pact or sweeping declarations, it underscored something significant: Kazakhstan's pragmatic multivector diplomacy while also promoting dialogue over confrontation. His emphasis on restraint, nuclear non-proliferation, and UN reform highlights Kazakhstan's ambition to be seen not just as a regional actor, but as a global mediator in times of uncertainty.

On April 15, Turkmenistan's National Leader and former president, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, [met](#) with Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang to discuss strengthening bilateral ties and expanding cooperation. According to Turkmenistan Today, Ding's visit was made at the instruction of President Xi Jinping. Berdimuhamedow hailed the delegation's arrival as 'an important event demonstrating the high level of Turkmen-Chinese cooperation,' emphasising Turkmenistan's open-door policy and commitment to deepening friendship with China. Ding echoed this sentiment, stressing that China 'attaches great importance to strengthening its partnership with Turkmenistan' and described the relationship—built on mutual respect and equality—as a model of effective interstate cooperation. He also thanked President Serdar Berdimuhamedow and the Turkmen leader for creating favorable investment conditions for Chinese companies operating in Turkmenistan.

Turkmenistan's meeting with China's Vice Premier underscores Beijing's deepening strategic foothold in Central Asia, where energy cooperation and favorable investment conditions are reinforcing Turkmenistan's role as a critical partner in China's regional ambitions.

Other Developments

[Azerbaijan says it is ready to supply LNG to Pakistan](#)

[Armenia and Azerbaijan open up to trade after years of strained ties](#)

[Informal Meeting of OTS Council of Foreign Ministers held in Antalya](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

US forces [boarded](#) an oil tanker previously sanctioned for smuggling Iranian crude oil in Asia, the Pentagon announced on Tuesday. The operation was described as a “right-of-visit maritime interdiction” of the M/T Tifani, which was conducted “without incident”. The Tifani was [intercepted](#) in the Bay of Bengal – between India and Southeast Asia – and was carrying Iranian oil, [according](#) to a US defense official. This is the second vessel the US has halted in recent days. Over the weekend, the USS Spruance captured an Iranian-flagged cargo vessel attempting to pass through the naval blockade near the Strait of Hormuz – a blockade the US instituted last week to wrest control of the strait from Iranian forces, which have virtually blocked traffic in the vital trade corridor since a war began in late February.

The US is using maritime enforcement as an economic chokehold. By targeting vessels like the Tifani deep in the Indo-Pacific – far from the Strait of Hormuz – Washington is signalling that it intends to strangle Iran's revenue streams globally, not just regionally.

India and South Korea have [unveiled](#) an ambitious maritime cooperation framework that could reshape India's position in global shipbuilding. The initiative, titled VOYAGES – Vision for Operation of Yard Assisted Growth with Efficiency and Scale – was formalized during high-level talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung on April 20, 2026, and is designed to align with India's long-term Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047. At the heart of the partnership is a massive vessel acquisition programme. India announced a pipeline of over 400 vessels valued at approximately ₹2.2 lakh crore, or roughly USD 25 billion, which is expected to drive domestic shipbuilding, attract global players, and strengthen India's local manufacturing ecosystem. The partnership is built on a complementary model – India brings scale and demand to the table, while South Korea contributes advanced technology and deep engineering expertise. Key elements include greenfield shipbuilding clusters with Korean firms as anchor partners, brownfield upgrades to existing Indian shipyards, and a \$13.3 billion PPP port investment pipeline covering major projects at Vadhvan, Bahuda, and Deendayal ports. Workforce development, academic ties between maritime universities, and the opening of a Korea Marine Equipment Association branch in Mumbai round out the partnership.

South Korea is arguably the world's most sophisticated shipbuilding nation, and India genuinely has what Korea lacks – a large domestic vessel demand pipeline, a young maritime workforce, and lower land and labour costs. This is the most substantive Indo-Korean maritime engagement India has announced. However, whether India can match global timelines, sustain policy incentives, and scale its shipyard ecosystem to Korean standards will matter far more than announcements.

Other Developments

[INS Sunayna arrives at Jakarta under Indian navy's IOS Sagar initiative](#)

[Raksha Mantri calls for enhanced India-Germany defence industrial partnerships](#)



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