



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

INDIA'S PROXIMITY ARCHIVES

December 24, 2025

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South Asia & East Asia:

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Indian Ocean Region

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

Cover Images:

South Asia: India's Minister of External Affairs, Dr. S. Jaishankar and Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disanayake jointly inaugurated a 120-foot dual carriageway Bailey Bridge in the Kilinochchi District of Northern Province of Sri Lanka on December 23, 2025. Source: [X/@DrSJJaishankar](https://twitter.com/DrSJJaishankar)

West Asia: Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi met in Muscat on December 18, 2025. Source: [Official X Handle/Narendra Modi](https://twitter.com/OfficialXHandle/NarendraModi)

Central Asia: The leaders of Central Asia and Japan commenced the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue (CA+JAD), on December 20, 2025. Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan](https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/2025/12/20_01.html)

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Watch Points

◇ Rising anti-Indian sentiments in Bangladesh

◇ India-Oman CEPA: a milestone in Gulf engagement

South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Following the death of youth leader [Sharif Osman Hadi](#) on December 18, protests erupted across Bangladesh from December 19, with calls for the arrest of the individuals responsible for his shooting. Protesters damaged and set fire to media outlets and attacked [Indian diplomatic missions](#) throughout Bangladesh. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs summoned [Bangladeshi envoy](#) Riaz Hamidullah to express its concerns regarding the actions of certain extremist groups that are inciting anti-Indian sentiment. As a reciprocal action, the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs [summoned](#) Pranay Verma, the Indian High Commissioner to Dhaka. Tension persisted nationwide following attacks targeting [political figures](#) and members of the [minority community](#) in various regions.

The interim government's failure to address arson and mob violence has contributed to a climate of political instability. The deliberate efforts to provoke anti-Indian sentiment within Bangladesh are undermining the bilateral relations between the two countries.

On December 23rd, Dr. S. Jaishankar, India's Minister of External Affairs, [visited Sri Lanka](#). The visit occurred in relation to Operation Sagar Bandhu, implemented to respond to the destruction from Cyclone Ditwah. Dr. Jaishankar, after meeting with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, revealed a [USD 450 million package](#) for the reconstruction of regions affected by the Cyclone. He stated that India's support will encompass the sectors most affected by the cyclone, including the reconstruction and repair of road, railway, and bridge infrastructure, as well as assistance with the building of fully and partially damaged houses. The Cyclone Ditwah, which struck Sri Lanka in late November, has caused an estimated [USD 4.1 billion](#) in damage to the nation's infrastructure and the economic well-being of its citizens.

Cyclone Ditwah has inflicted considerable damage, impeding Sri Lanka's economic recovery from the crisis. Direct financial assistance from India, in addition to humanitarian aid, could potentially alleviate fiscal strain.

Other Developments

[The commissioning ceremony of Pakistan Navy's second MILGEM class ship PNS Khaibar was held at Istanbul Naval Shipyard, Türkiye](#)

[Pakistan snaps up major arms deal with Libyan force](#)

[Washington okays upgrade package for Pakistan's F-16 fleet](#)

[India to Supply Medicines to Afghanistan on Long-Term Basis](#)

[Deposed Nepal PM Oli gets re-elected as CPN-UML chair for third term](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [December 22](#), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) foreign ministers met in Malaysia, seeking to end border [clashes between Thailand and Cambodia](#) that have killed at least 40 people and displaced more than half a million in the latest round of conflict. The ASEAN meeting chaired by Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan focused on the steps ASEAN could take to help de-escalate the situation and end the fighting. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim expressed hope that the meeting would “enable Thailand and Cambodia to negotiate openly, resolve differences and achieve a fair and lasting solution”. In an official statement, Bangkok outlined three conditions for moving forward - Cambodia must officially declare a ceasefire; the ceasefire must be maintained and observed in practice; and Cambodia must demonstrate genuine cooperation in de-mining operations along the border. While Thailand and Cambodia [failed to reach an immediate ceasefire agreement](#) on December 22, the two countries confirmed they will reconvene on December 24 to continue discussions.

ASEAN's mediation reflects its bid to reaffirm its role as a regional stabilizer, delicately balancing sovereignty with collective security. For Thailand and Cambodia, the clashes expose fragile border politics where deep-rooted mistrust continues to obstruct lasting peace.

On [December 23](#), the United Nations reported that Myanmar's junta is employing violence and intimidation to compel voter participation in upcoming military-controlled elections, while armed opposition groups are using similar tactics to deter turnout. Scheduled for December 28, the polls are being promoted by the junta as a return to democracy—five years after it ousted the last elected government and plunged the country into civil war. International monitors have dismissed the phased, month-long vote as little more than a rebranding of martial rule. The UN rights office also noted that dozens of individuals have been detained under an “election protection law” for exercising their freedom of expression.

It is evident that the military-controlled ballot paves the way for the junta-aligned Union Solidarity and Development Party's (USDP) return to office, serving as a veneer of legitimacy aimed at re-engaging the global stage amid waning cooperation from countries and organizations like ASEAN.

Other Developments

[Cambodia says Thailand has bombed casino town on border as hostilities continue](#)

[Thailand's snap poll set to boost odds for PM Anutin, but risks loom](#)

East Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

On December 18, the United States authorised the sale of [USD 11 billion in arms](#) to Taiwan. The sale is subject to the approval by the US Congress. This marks the second arms sale to Taiwan that was announced during the Trump administration. The eight arms sales agreements encompass 82 high-mobility artillery rocket systems (HIMARS), 420 Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS), 60 self-propelled howitzer systems, and associated equipment. However, Taiwan's opposition KMT party which holds a majority in the legislature refused to pass a \$ 40 billion supplementary defense budget needed to underwrite the arms acquisition, meaning that Taiwan's ability to pay was in question. Beijing [voiced its anger](#), denouncing the sale announcement.

There has been a recent uptick in the deployment of Chinese military aircraft and warships around Taiwan, which are being used as coercive measures. In this context, the Taiwanese government has designated a special budget for advanced arms purchases in order to maintain deterrence through the enhancement of self-defense capabilities.

Subsequent to a [media report](#) quoting a senior security official within Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's office, which advocated for the acquisition of nuclear weapons as a deterrent, the Japanese government on December 19 reaffirmed its dedication to abstaining from nuclear weaponry. An unnamed official stated earlier that Japan required nuclear weapons due to a deteriorating security environment, but conceded that such a measure would present political difficulties. At a press briefing in Tokyo, Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara announced that Japan's nuclear policy was unchanged, but he did not offer any comments on the statements or indicate if the person in question would continue in their role, despite the opposition leaders' demands for their removal. Last month, Prime Minister Takaichi sparked controversy by refraining from clarifying whether her administration would alter the three principles during the formulation of a new defense strategy next year.

Japan's shifting security outlook is shaped by China's assertive behaviour and the expanding missile partnership between Russia and North Korea. In response to these developments, Japan is witnessing a rise in political and public openness to modifying its nuclear weapon policy.

Other Developments

[South Korean lawmakers pass Bill to establish rebellion courts after complaints about Yoon case](#)

[U.S. nuclear-powered submarine enters South Korean port](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

India and Oman signed a [Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement](#) (CEPA) during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Oman on December 18. India's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, stated that the agreement would enhance opportunities for Indian exporters as it opens up nearly universal duty-free access to Indian goods in Oman's market, facilitates greater mobility of Indian professionals, and expands services commitments across high-growth sectors. It will benefit India's labour-intensive sectors, generating employment and strengthening Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

India-Oman CEPA represents a key milestone in India's growing engagement with the Gulf region, reflecting a shared commitment to deepening economic integration.

On December 23, the United Nations Security Council held a briefing on the Iranian nuclear issue. The US reaffirmed its willingness to engage in direct nuclear negotiations with Iran; however, it maintained a firm stance against permitting any [uranium enrichment activities inside Iran](#). On its part, Iran emphasised that a [zero-enrichment policy was contrary](#) to Tehran's rights under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), adding that it would not yield to US pressure or intimidation.

While the US and Iran have reaffirmed their commitment to diplomacy on the nuclear issue, major differences between the two sides make progress on a deal unlikely.

On December 19, the US Central Command struck more than 70 ISIS targets in Syria following an [attack on three US personnel](#) by Islamic State militants. According to President Trump, the Syrian government had supported the operation against ISIS, and the US had inflicted heavy losses on the terrorist organisation.

After the fall of the Assad regime, the US military's operation against ISIS in Syria demonstrates a growing counter-terrorism cooperation between Washington and Syria's new regime.

Other Developments

[Israeli air strike kills three in southern Lebanon, state news agency says](#)

[Presidents of UAE, France discuss strengthening bilateral ties at Abu Dhabi meeting](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [December 20](#), Japan and five Central Asian nations unveiled new initiatives – most notably on critical minerals supply chains – at their first-ever summit in Tokyo. The Central Asia plus Japan Dialogue brought together Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Kyrgyzstan's President Sadyr Zhaparov, Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon, Turkmenistan's President Serdar Berdimuhamedov and Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The Tokyo Declaration, an ambitious [roadmap](#) for future cooperation, was adopted during the summit. It aims to transform relations between Japan and the five Central Asian countries into a deep and multifaceted strategic partnership. Japanese Prime Minister Takaichi said: "Central Asia's presence in the international arena has increased, against the backdrop of changes in the international situation within and surrounding the region over the past 21 years."

Japan's outreach to Central Asia signals a bid to diversify critical supply chains and counterbalance China's influence. For the five Central Asian Countries, the partnership offers strategic leverage to amplify their global profile beyond Russia's and China's orbit.

Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev [concluded](#) an official visit to Japan that both Uzbek and Japanese sources have described as a turning point in bilateral relations. According to Sherzod Asadov, the president's press secretary, the visit [elevated](#) Uzbekistan-Japan ties to an expanded strategic partnership, marking a shift from primarily humanitarian and technical cooperation to a broader economic framework grounded in long-term strategic planning. During the visit, Mirziyoyev held meetings with Emperor Naruhito, Prime Minister, Sanae Takaichi, parliamentary leaders, senior government officials, and representatives from Japan's business and academic communities. Asadov noted that a new portfolio of cooperation projects, valued at more than US\$ 12 billion, was formed, encompassing sectors such as education, healthcare, environmental protection, water management, transport, urban development, tourism, agriculture, and disaster-risk reduction. Particular emphasis was placed on green energy, energy storage systems, and industrial cooperation. Major Japanese corporations were invited to join long-term partnership programs, signalling a deepening of economic ties.

While Central Asian nations are pursuing collective frameworks, such as summits with Japan, to amplify their regional voice, they are deepening bilateral partnerships – like Uzbekistan's expanded ties with Tokyo – leveraging individual strengths to secure tailored economic and strategic gains.

Other Developments

[ADB Provides Tajik Bank with First Direct Loan of \\$10 Million](#)

[UK Adds Uzbekistan-Based Companies and Tashkent Businessman to Russia Sanctions List](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Sri Lanka on December 23, 2025, as [Special Envoy](#) of the Prime Minister and held meetings with Sri Lankan leaders, including President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya. He assured them of India's commitment to the island nation's reconstruction in the wake of destruction caused by cyclone Ditwah and [pledged a reconstruction package](#) of \$450 to Sri Lanka as part of India's First Responder activity under Operation Sagar Bandhu. The package comprises \$100 million in grant and \$350 million in concessional credit lines. He said that the assistance will cover sectors worst affected by the cyclone, including rehabilitation and restoration of road, railway and bridge connectivity; support for the construction of damaged houses; support for health and education systems; agriculture; and working towards better disaster response and preparedness.

This package reinforces India's "Neighbourhood First" and MAHASAGAR policies to position New Delhi as the Indian Ocean's premier first responder. It also counters China's regional influence by deepening bilateral ties with President Dissanayake's government during its post-2022 crisis recovery.

Anjadip, the third of eight ASW SWC (Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft), indigenously designed and built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, [was delivered](#) to the Indian Navy on December 22 at Chennai. The ASW SWC ships have been designed and constructed as per the Classification Rules of Indian Register of Shipping (IRS) under a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) of GRSE with M/s L&T Shipyard, Kattupalli. These ships are the largest Indian Naval Warships propelled by waterjets and are equipped with state-of-the-art lightweight torpedoes, indigenously designed anti-submarine rockets and shallow-water SONAR, enabling effective detection and engagement of underwater threats. The ship will strengthen Navy's anti-submarine, coastal surveillance and mine-laying capabilities. The ship is a reincarnation of the erstwhile INS Anjadip, a Petya class Corvette decommissioned in 2003.

Anjadip's delivery is yet another milestone in the Indian Navy's quest for indigenous shipbuilding, upholding the Government's vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

Other Developments

[Vice Admiral Tarun Sobti called on the Minister of Foreign Affairs \(Maldives\) to discuss cooperation in maritime security and safety in the Indian Ocean](#)

[India and Oman adopted a Joint Vision Document on Maritime Cooperation](#)

[INAS 335 'The Ospreys', the second Indian Naval Air Squadron to operate MH 60R helicopters, was commissioned at INS Hansa](#)



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