

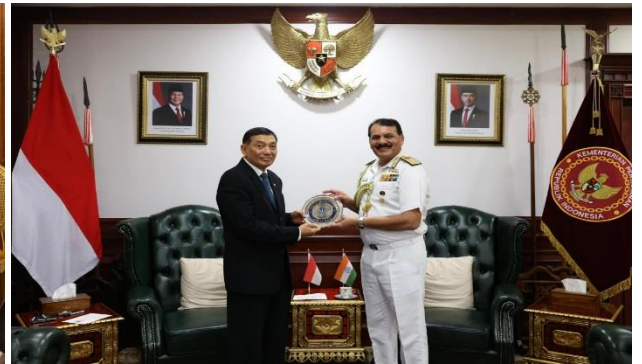


Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives December 18, 2024



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Delhi Policy Group

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

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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 Image:

South Asia: Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi received the President of Sri Lanka, Anura Kumara Dissanayake at the Hyderabad House, New Delhi on December 16, 2024. Source: [Flickr/MEA](#)

Southeast Asia: India's Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi held a meeting with Indonesian Defence Minister Lt. Gen. Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin on December 17, 2024. Source: [X/@indiannavy](#)

West Asia: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken attended a meeting in Aqaba, Jordan on the situation in Syria on December 14, 2024. Source: [Official X Handle/Secretary Antony Blinken](#)

Indian Ocean Region: Sri Lankan Navy Ship SLNS Sayura arrived in Visakhapatnam for the 11th edition of IN-SLN bilateral Maritime Exercise SLINEX-24. Source: [X/@indiannavy](#)

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

President of Sri Lanka Anura Kumara Dissanayake [visited India](#) from December 15-17. He met President Droupadi Murmu and held a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He also met with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, among other officials. At [a joint press conference](#) with President Dissanayake, Prime Minister Modi announced the decision to swiftly finalise a bilateral security cooperation agreement. President [Dissanayake assured](#) that he would not allow his country's territory to be used against India. Sharing a [forward-looking vision](#), both nations agreed to strengthen their partnership by building an interconnected electricity grid and jointly developing petroleum pipelines.

A suicide attack in Kabul on December 11 killed [Khalil Ur-Rahman Haqqani](#), the Taliban's refugee minister, and four others. He was a high-ranking member of the Haqqani Network. The Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), claimed responsibility for killing Haqqani, the most significant assassination of a leader within Afghanistan's Taliban government. The bombing has sparked concerns about internal Taliban and allied divisions, the ISKP's influence, and Afghanistan's overall security.

From December 11-14, Nepal Army Chief General Ashok Raj Sigdel [visited India](#), meeting with General Upendra Dwivedi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, NSA Ajit Doval, CDS General Anil Chauhan, and Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh. [Key developments](#) in defence, capacity building, and cultural exchange resulted from the visit, underscoring the close bilateral relationship. General Sigdel received an Honorary Generalship in the Indian Army during his visit. India gifted [target practice drones](#) to Nepal to enhance its defence training capabilities and delivery of advanced medical equipment.

Other Developments

[Bhutan king, Assam CM discuss promotion of regional economic development](#)

[Dhaka, Delhi reaffirm deep-rooted friendship between armed forces, people](#)

[Election can be held between end of 2025 and first half of 2026 in Bangladesh: Dr Yunus](#)

[Bangladesh taking action against attacks on minorities... situation improving: Indian Foreign Secretary to Parliament panel](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V

On [December 17](#), during a meeting between India's Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi and Indonesian Defence Minister Lt. Gen. Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin, the latter evinced keen interest in collaborating with India in defence technology. The two sides discussed strengthening bilateral cooperation and various aspects of defence collaboration, including joint exercises. According to the [Indian Navy Spokesperson](#), maritime cooperation including operational engagements and joint training initiatives were also discussed. The Indonesian Defence Ministry stated that Admiral Tripathi explained that India is developing indigenous technologies to support the advancement of its Navy and Gen. Sjafrie appreciated the rapid progress in the domain.

On December 16, the Philippine Senate ratified a reciprocal access agreement (RAA) with Japan that would allow their militaries to deploy on each other's soil as both countries worry about China's increasingly assertive stance in the region. The RAA, the first of its kind that Japan has signed in Asia, will ease the entry of equipment and troops for combat training and disaster response, smoothing military cooperation between Manila and Tokyo.

On [December 16](#), Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim appointed Thailand's billionaire political heavyweight and former premier Thaksin Shinawatra as his personal adviser for when he becomes chair of Southeast Asia's regional bloc next year. Anwar said Thaksin's role during his leadership of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations will be in an informal capacity, alongside advisers from several of the bloc's 10 member states.

Other Developments

[Thailand anti-coup bill creates strains in ruling coalition](#)

[Quad Nations To Conduct 1st Joint Coast Guard Training In January](#)

[Thailand Launches Bold Push To Break ASEAN's Myanmar Deadlock](#)

[Indian Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh Tripathi and Indonesia's Defence Minister hold talks on growing defence ties](#)

East Asia

by

Divya Rai

South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol was impeached by the National Assembly over his controversial declaration of martial law on December 3. On December 14, the National Assembly [voted on the impeachment motion](#), resulting in 204 votes in favour, 85 against, 3 abstentions, and 8 invalid votes out of a total of 300 lawmakers. Notably, some members of Yoon's own ruling People Power Party (PPP) supported the impeachment, indicating a significant shift in political allegiance following his decree. After lawmakers voted against martial law, Yoon's presidential powers were suspended. The Constitutional Court now has up to 180 days to review the impeachment and decide whether to uphold or overturn it. Prime Minister Han Duck-soo has [taken over the role](#) of acting president.

Emmanuel Bonne, the diplomatic adviser to French President Emmanuel Macron, is [visiting](#) China from December 13 to 14, 2024. During his visit, Bonne participated in the 26th China-France Strategic Dialogue, where he co-chaired discussions with Chinese officials. This trip is part of the preparations for a potential visit by Macron himself in 2025, aimed at strengthening bilateral relations and discussing strategic issues, including the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

Taiwan's defence ministry [announced the arrival](#) of 38 M1A2 Abrams tanks from the United States on December 16, 2024, amid rising tensions with China. This delivery is the first of 108 tanks ordered in 2019, with a total value of approximately \$1.4 billion. The tanks were transported to an army training base in Hsinchu, where training is set to begin on January 29, 2025. As additional tanks are scheduled for delivery—42 more expected in 2025 and the remaining 28 in 2026. The arrival of the M1A2 Abrams tanks may further strain U.S.-China relations and influence military dynamics in East Asia.

Other Developments

[China Launches Hypersonic military aircraft form drones](#)

[Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense \(MND\) reported 10 People's Liberation Army \(PLA\) aircraft and 7 naval vessels around the island](#)

[Former investment banker and China critic, George Glass named as Ambassador to Japan](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

The Arab Ministerial Contact Group on Syria, consisting of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, and the Secretary-General of the Arab League, met in Aqaba, Jordan, on December 14. They affirmed support for a peaceful [Syrian-led political transition](#) that includes all political and social factions in the country. All parties condemned Israel's incursions into the buffer zone with Syria and called upon Tel Aviv to withdraw from these occupied areas. Meanwhile, the Israeli government approved a plan to invest USD 11 million to increase the number of [Israeli residents in the occupied Golan Heights](#).

US Secretary of State Antony [Blinken visited Jordan, Türkiye, and Iraq](#) between December 11-14. Secretary Blinken discussed developments in Syria, Israel, Gaza, and Lebanon, and reaffirmed the US's support for an inclusive, Syrian-led transition to an accountable, representative government. He emphasised the importance of [preventing Syria from being used as a base for terrorism](#) or posing a threat to its neighbours, as well as ensuring that chemical weapons stockpiles are destroyed safely. To this end, Blinken emphasised the "critical" role of US-backed Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in preventing a resurgence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL).

On December 12, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan met with Israeli leaders in Jerusalem as part of Washington's push to end the war in Gaza. According to Sullivan, [Israel had emerged "stronger"](#) after Hamas' October 7, 2023 terror attack and that the balance of power in the Middle East had changed due to a weaker Iran and decimated proxies. The Biden administration is hoping that the recent ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hezbollah as well as the overthrow of the Assad regime in Syria would help to build momentum towards a deal in Gaza before January 20, 2025.

Other Developments

[Syria's de facto new leader Ahmed al-Sharaa calls for lifting of sanctions](#)

[Several countries slam Israeli plans to expand settlements in Syria's Golan](#)

[Secretary Blinken's Meeting with Turkish President Erdoğan](#)

[Hezbollah chief says group lost its supply route through Syria](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [December 15](#), during a working visit to Afghanistan, Turkmenistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Rashid Meredov met with Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi to review the progress of major energy, transport, and infrastructure projects involving Turkmenistan in Afghanistan. The ministers inspected the ongoing construction of the Afghan section of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) natural gas pipeline and agreed to accelerate its implementation. Turkmenistan has already completed its section of the TAPI pipeline, designed to transport 33 billion cubic meters of Turkmen natural gas annually to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India.

On [December 11](#), the Chairman of the Defence Committee of Russia's State Duma, or lower parliament house, Andrey Kartapolov, called for Iran's admittance to the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). He stated that a delegation from Iran had already participated in a meeting of the CSTO Parliamentary Assembly. "I think that the issue of Iran's potential membership in the CSTO should be looked at in a more concrete way. Why not, after all? [The CSTO] is not a private club," he said in an interview with the Rossiya-1 television channel.

Yue Xiaoyong, China's envoy to Afghanistan, [held a meeting](#) with Sharaf Rahimi, head of the strategic studies department of the Tajik Foreign Ministry. After the meeting, he wrote on social media platform X that he had a "very good conversation with the Tajik diplomat about helping Afghanistan". China and Tajikistan, like other countries, have not yet recognised the Taliban. However, China has extensive diplomatic and economic ties with the Taliban. Tajikistan, which hosts members of the National Resistance Front, has refused to establish diplomatic relations with the Taliban. On the hand, Tajik officials have repeatedly criticised the Taliban over the past three years. The Tajik president has said that the Taliban, despite their promises, are opposed to forming an inclusive government in Afghanistan.

Other Developments

[Armenian PM insists country has irrevocably broken with the Russia-led CSTO](#)

[Constant Threats From Terrorist Groups Originate From Afghan Soil, Says CSTO](#)

[Kazakhstan Offers Neutral Ground for Peace Talks, Says Deputy Minister Vassilenko](#)

[How Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan Anchor a Strategic Middle-Power Hub in Central Asia](#)



Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

The 11th edition of the Sri Lanka–India naval exercise, SLINEX-24, is [scheduled to take place](#) in Visakhapatnam from December 17 to 20, 2024. The exercise consists of two phases: a Harbour Phase on December 17-18, focusing on professional exchanges and planning discussions, and a Sea Phase on December 19-20, featuring joint operational drills such as special forces operations and navigation exercises. Participating units include India's INS Sumitra and Sri Lanka's SLNS Sayura. SLINEX-24 aims to enhance maritime cooperation and interoperability between the two navies, reinforcing their commitment to regional maritime security.

Indian Coast Guard's (ICG) Offshore Patrol Vessel ICGS Vaibhav and Fast Patrol Vessel ICGS Abhiraj made a port call at Male, Maldives on December 16, 2024, as part of their [overseas deployment](#) to the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). This visit aims to strengthen maritime ties between India and the Maldives, reflecting India's commitment to enhancing security and cooperation in the region. Following their visit to Maldives, the vessels are scheduled to visit the Sri Lankan ports of Colombo and Galle, where they will engage in professional interactions with local maritime authorities.

Other Developments

[Indian Navy handed over four Inflatable Rubber Crafts and four Outboard Motors \(OBMs\) to the Mauritius Police Force \(MPF\)](#)

[Third China-Indian Ocean Region Forum on Blue Economy Development Cooperation, held from December 15 to 17, 2024](#)



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