

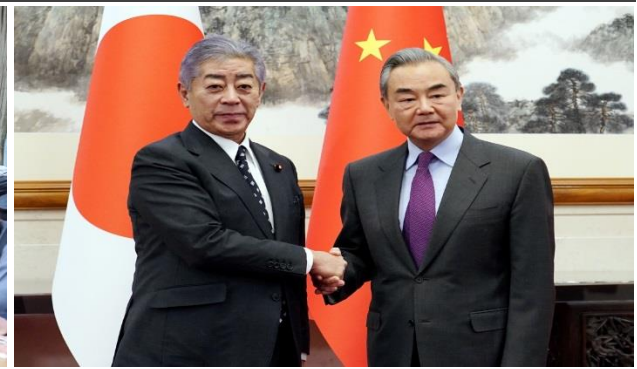


Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



India's Proximity Archives December 26, 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: Pakistan's Special Envoy to Afghanistan, Mohammad Sadiq Khan, accompanying a delegation, called on Taliban's Foreign Minister, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi in Kabul, Afghanistan, on December 24, 2024. Source: [IEA MOFA](#)

East Asia: Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya held Japan-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting with China's Foreign Affairs Minister Wang Yi during his first visit to China, on December 25,. Source: [X/@MofaJapan en](#)

West Asia: Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and the Emir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held a meeting in Kuwait on December 22, 2024. Source: [Official X Handle/Narendra Modi](#)

Central Asia: During the official visit to Malaysia, President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov and Prime Minister of Malaysia Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, established a joint commission to strengthen ties on December 19, 2024. Source: [Prime Minister of Malaysia](#)

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South Asia

by

Shreyas Deshmukh

Four Pakistani groups involved in the country's long-range missile program face [U.S. sanctions](#), as announced on December 18. These companies have been involved in acquiring components for Pakistan's long-range ballistic missile program. The sanctions were implemented under an executive order which targets proliferators of WMDs and their delivery mechanism. Pakistan and Chinese companies faced similar sanctions in October 2023 and April 2024. Speaking at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on December 19, [U.S. Deputy National Security Adviser](#) Jon Finer called Pakistan's long-range missile program an "emerging threat" and stated that it is "fundamentally focused on us." Pakistan [denounced sanctions](#), calling it "discriminatory".

Kabul hosted talks on December 24 with a [Pakistani delegation](#) led by their special envoy on Afghanistan, Muhammad Sadiq. This was the first high-level visit by the Pakistani side to Kabul in 15 months. Ambassador Muhammad Sadiq held talks with Afghanistan's Interior Minister, Sirajuddin Haqqani, and Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi. According to an Afghan statement, the Muhammad Sadiq-led delegation talked about bilateral matters, cross-sectoral cooperation, and better relations. That same night, [Pakistani airstrikes](#) in Afghanistan's eastern Paktika province killed at least 46 people. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid denounced the attack as "clear aggression" and vowed the Taliban government would retaliate. The airstrikes, Pakistan asserted, aimed to eliminate [suspected](#) Pakistani Taliban hideouts located in Afghanistan.

In a diplomatic note issued on December 23, Bangladesh's interim [government](#) sought the extradition of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from India. Bangladesh made its request following the Dhaka-based International Crimes Tribunal's (ICT) issuing of arrest warrants for Hasina and several former cabinet members, advisors, and military and civilian officials on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity.

Other Developments

[Gunmen attack Indian Consulate employees in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan](#)

[India 'strongly protest' Bangladesh aide Mahfuz Alam social media post](#)

[Sri Lanka to soon formulate national policy on visits by foreign research vessels: Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister](#)

[Pakistani Military Courts Sentence 25 People For 2023 Unrest](#)

[Saudi Arabia embassy resumes diplomatic activities in Afghanistan](#)

Southeast Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V

Thailand recently hosted two consecutive regional meetings to address Myanmar's political and security crisis. On [December 19](#), the meeting discussed border security and cross-border challenges such as illicit drug trafficking, online scams, and the escalating conflict in Myanmar. This meeting included Myanmar and its immediate neighbours. The second meeting took place on [December 20](#) and involved additional members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This session focused on implementing the Five-Point Consensus (5PC) to address the situation in Myanmar and ensure a smooth transition between the current ASEAN chair and the next in managing the crisis.

During the informal consultation on December 19, Myanmar's foreign minister provided participants with an overview of the junta's political roadmap and plans for holding elections. However, representatives from Myanmar did not participate in the subsequent extended informal consultation, which included the foreign ministers of ASEAN, held on the following day.

On [December 21](#), a powerful ethnic armed group in western Myanmar claimed to have scored a significant victory in the war against the ruling military, as neighbouring nations met [in Thailand](#) to discuss efforts to end the conflict peacefully. The capture by the Arakan Army of a strategically important regional army headquarters in Rakhine state would put it a step closer to seizing control of the entire state, a goal not achieved by any of the several other rebel groups in other parts of Myanmar.

On [December 24](#), Former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra called for unity among coalition parties to ensure the government completes its full term. Thaksin, widely seen as the de facto leader of Pheu Thai, led by his daughter, Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, was asked to comment on the state of politics next year. Thaksin said: "There will be nothing much. Politics will remain the same. Coalition parties will remain unchanged. Differences of opinion are normal, but we must stick together until the end of the term in office, regardless." Campaigning in the province of Chiang Mai, Thaksin promised the government would roll out measures to tackle problems such as household debts, drug trafficking, and call centre scams. He said the government also plans to regulate underground businesses and address the PM2.5 haze pollution.

Other Developments

[Thailand's Pita keen to return as PM candidate after political ban](#)

[Prabowo's U-turn on foreign drug convicts marks Indonesia diplomacy push](#)

[Hanoi Convention, A Milestone In International Cooperation And Foreign Affairs: Minister](#)

East Asia

by

Divya Rai

Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya made his [first official visit](#) to China after assuming office, on December 25, 2024. The trip marks the first visit by a Japanese foreign minister to China since Yoshimasa Hayashi's trip in April 2023. Iwaya held the Japan-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi. He expressed "serious concerns" about China's military buildup, particularly in the East China Sea and near the disputed Senkaku Islands, known as Diaoyu in China. He also addressed the issue of China's seafood ban imposed after Japan released treated radioactive water from Fukushima. Although no immediate resolution was reached regarding the seafood ban, both ministers agreed to continue high-level discussions and explore economic dialogues in 2025.

On December 18, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi and India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval [convened](#) in Beijing for the 23rd round of Special Representatives talks. The discussions focused on managing peace and tranquillity along the border and restoring bilateral relations that had been largely frozen since the military standoff began in 2020. Key points included the necessity of maintaining stability at the LAC, enhancing cooperation such as resuming the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra pilgrimage, and revitalising border trade. This meeting [follows previous high-level discussions](#) between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping, where both leaders expressed a commitment to improving ties.

South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol has [once again defied a summons](#) to appear for questioning regarding his controversial declaration of martial law. On December 25, Yoon was ordered to report to the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials in Gwacheon, south of Seoul, but did not show up, continuing his pattern of non-compliance after previously ignoring a summons on December 15. The Constitutional Court of South Korea will hold its first public hearing regarding the impeachment, on December 27. It could last up to six months as the court deliberates on whether to uphold or reject the impeachment motion passed by the National Assembly on December 14.

Other Developments

[China and Vietnam Coast Guard conducted the fourth joint patrol in the Gulf of Tonkin December 24](#)

[Japan Airlines \(JAL\) has reported significant disruptions to its operations due to a cyberattack](#)

[Taiwan reported five PLAN vessels around its territory](#)

[China Coast Guard attends 8th China-Vietnam Coast Guards high-level work meeting](#)

West Asia

by

Sanket Joshi

On December 21-22, Prime Minister [Narendra Modi visited Kuwait](#) where he met the country's Emir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. The two sides elevated their [bilateral relationship to a "strategic partnership"](#) pledging to deepen and expand cooperation. PM Modi invited a delegation from the Kuwait Investment Authority to visit India to [explore investment opportunities](#) in energy, pharmaceuticals, defence, medical devices, and food parks. He was awarded Kuwait's highest state honour, 'The Order of Mubarak Al Kabeer'.

On December 19, diplomats from Arab countries met Wang Yi, Director of China's Central Commission for Foreign Affairs. At the meeting, Wang Yi discussed the [strengthening of all-round Sino-Arab cooperation](#), and urged a comprehensive, just, and lasting settlement of the Israel-Palestine issue based on the two-state solution. He also stressed the importance of preserving Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the importance of an open and inclusive political process in Syria. The Arab diplomats expressed their hope that [China would play a more significant role](#) in easing tensions in the Middle East and reaffirmed their support for the one-China principle.

After the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad's regime, Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan became the first Foreign Minister to visit Syria's capital Damascus on December 22. In his meeting with Syria's new de facto leader Ahmed al-Sharaa, the Turkish Foreign Minister expressed concern over the threat posed to Syria's national unity by [Kurdish militants \(YPG\)](#) and urged Damascus to take action against them. The meeting took place against the backdrop of hostilities in northeast Syria between Turkish-backed Syrian fighters and the YPG, which leads the US-allied Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Following continued missile and drone attacks on Israeli cities by Yemen's Houthi militia, Israeli Defence Minister Katz warned that the [IDF will target Houthi leaders](#). He stressed that Houthi leaders would share the fate of Hamas and Hezbollah leaders who were killed in Israeli airstrikes.

Other Developments

[Secretary Antony J. Blinken in a Conversation at the Council on Foreign Relations](#)

[Hamas and Israel blame each other for ceasefire delay](#)

[US strikes Houthi targets in Yemen, takes down drones over Red Sea](#)

Central Asia

by

Jayantika Rao T.V.

On [December 25](#), Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted an informal Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) meeting and brought together regional leaders of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. During the discussions, participants reviewed the outcomes of their collaborative efforts in 2024 and identified priority areas for multilateral cooperation in the coming year. A key focus was placed on enhancing intra-regional trade by addressing barriers to mutual trade and fostering deeper economic integration. In addition, the summit addressed pressing regional and global issues, emphasising the importance of coordinated efforts to combat common challenges and threats. A central theme was enhancing practical cooperation within the CIS framework to ensure regional security and stability.

The President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, [visited Malaysia](#) from December 18 to 19, 2024, at the invitation of the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim. This was President Serdar Berdimuhamedov's first visit to Malaysia. Prime Minister Anwar said that Malaysia and Turkmenistan have reaffirmed their commitment to deepening their cooperation by [establishing a joint commission](#). The Leaders welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Malaysia and the Government of Turkmenistan in the field of tourism, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MICCI) and Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Turkmenistan, as well as between National Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (NCCIM) and Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Turkmenistan.

Following the Azerbaijan Airlines crash on December 25, various media outlets like Euronews have reported that the plane crash was not a "[bird strike](#)" as suggested by government officials. According to information obtained by Euronews from official sources involved in the crash investigation, surviving passengers reported hearing an explosion. They also noted that what appeared to be [shrapnel hitting the plane](#), damaging the fuselage. This information corresponds with a news report from Azerbaijan-based international news channel AnewZ, which quotes a Russian military blogger who claims that "the damage to the aircraft suggests that an air-defence missile system may have accidentally struck plane".

Other Developments

[Russia's Putin wishes Tajik counterpart success in CIS chairmanship beginning on January 1](#)

[President Tokayev Expresses Condolences to Azerbaijani President Over Plane Crash Tragedy](#)

Indian Ocean Region

by

Divya Rai

On December 21, 2024, INS Tushil, the Indian Navy's newest multi-role stealth-guided missile frigate, [made its first port call](#) in London, marking the start of its maiden operational deployment. Upon arrival in London, the ship was welcomed by Commodore Robert Bellfield, Royal Navy Commander for London and Eastern England.

The Indian Navy [received two new warships](#): the INS Surat, a destroyer, and the INS Nilgiri, a frigate, on December 20, 2024. Designed by the Warship Design Bureau of the Indian Navy and constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), these vessels embody India's commitment to self-reliance in defense manufacturing. The INS Surat, part of Project 15B, is a stealth guided missile destroyer. Notably, it will be the Indian Navy's first AI-enabled warship, enhancing operational efficiency through indigenous AI solutions. The INS Nilgiri, the first of the Project 17A stealth frigates, follows in the lineage of the Shivalik class frigates. This multi-mission vessel is designed for operations in blue water environments and is equipped with a range of modern weaponry, including supersonic surface-to-surface missiles and medium-range surface-to-air missiles.

During a conference, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General (R) Zubair Mehmood Hayat [stated](#) as far as "Indian Ocean Region (IOR)" is concerned, India is the "elephant in the room". He added "Pakistan has consistently asserted that this body of water is the "Indian Ocean," not "India's Ocean". Speaking at the [conference jointly organised](#) by Maritime Center of Excellence (MCE) at Pakistan Navy War College Lahore in collaboration with the Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS), Islamabad, he further emphasised that Pakistan is a direct stakeholder in IOR and called for proactive policies to safeguard its national interests amid escalating geopolitical competition.

Other Developments

[Two US Navy pilots were downed while flying over the Red Sea in what seems to be a friendly fire incident, according to military reports](#)

[Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre–Indian Ocean Region \(IFC-IOR\) completed 6 Years of Glorious Service](#)



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